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At the turn of the past century the world of a country boy was small, but the realm of his dreams was as unlimited as it is today. . . . In many respects Smith's life typifies that of an average American Mennonite . . . . On the other hand, his stature towers far above the average. With many he shares a common conservative home and community background, which he gradually outgrew. . . . His insatiable desire to learn more about the world took him out of the confines of his narrow background into the world of learning, but his abiding love and loyalty for the deeper principles of the brotherhood brought him back to his own people, where he became an outstanding leader, educator, and scholar.

In this book C. Henry Smith reveals so aptly the common feelings of many as they too look back to their boyhood days with humor and nostalgia. Some of these reflections from the book are reprinted below.

A BOY'S WORLD *The world in which I lived was made up largely of birds, trees, meadows, glorious days of sunshine, nights of full moon, and soft winds rustling through the big leaves of the cottonwoods or sighing through the pines. Rainy days, no doubt, and stormy nights there were plenty, but I do not remember them. Only the bright and joyous face of nature left an impression on my memory.*

SCHOOL DAYS *In view of the fact that nearly my whole life has been spent in the schoolroom, I should like to say that from my very first day in the district school I was passionately fond of all things intellectual; but a decent regard for the truth constrains me to confess that for some years at least I hated school and everything connected with it.*

PUBLIC SCHOOLS *Most of the children in our district were of Swiss and German stock, though American born, and for the most part of American-born parentage. One family was Irish. The rest we classed as Yankees, though none came from New England. No matter, however, from what part of the world their parents or grandparents came, the children were all typical Americans, not conscious of any divided loyalty. All spoke the English language equally well; all studied a common history and the same literature; and all shared common ideals of political democracy*

(Continued on back flap)

Mennonite Country Boy

Mennonite Country Boy

The Early Years of C. Henry Smith

By C. Henry Smith

Faith and Life Press, Newton, Kansas

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Mennonite Country Boy
The Early Years of C. Henry Smith
C. Henry Smith

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Preface

AT THE TURN of the past century the world of a country boy was small, but the realm of his dreams was as unlimited as it is today. This book opens to the reader such dreams and their realization as C. Henry Smith (1875-1948) vividly portrays them. His grandparents came from Alsace-Lorraine, settling in the Amish-Mennonite community of Metamora, Illinois, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The autobiography is a masterpiece of writing. One is led to realize what obstacles a boy encountered when his dreams took him beyond the limits of the world in which he lived.

In many respects Smith's life typifies that of an average American Mennonite at the turn of the century. On the other hand, his stature towers far above the average. With many he shares a common conservative home and community background, which he gradually outgrew. He is not unique in this respect, because thousands before and since that time have done the same. His insatiable desire to learn more about the world took him out of the confines of his narrow background into the world of learning, but his abiding love and loyalty for the deeper principles of the brotherhood brought him back to his own people, where he became an outstanding leader, educator, and scholar. This is the root of his unique contribution.

At the turn of the century the Mennonites were primarily rural, fully satisfied with an average elementary education. The thrilling story of the struggles that went with the process of introducing higher education and opening the world of letters, arts, and science to the Mennonites of America is related on these pages in a most charming manner.

When, as a young Amish-Mennonite boy filled with curiosity, he left his home to go to a secondary school, he was struck by the difference between the new environment and that of his home community. He was puzzled as to who the Amish and the Mennonites were, whence they had come, what their basic principles and beliefs were, and what their practices signified. In our day persons with these questions can find books on this subject in almost any library. Not so when Smith was a youth. This great change is due largely to the fact that C. Henry Smith pondered over these questions so persistently that he investigated them and presented his findings in numerous books. These books have in turn inspired many others to continue research which culminated in the production of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, of which he was one of the editors.

C. Henry Smith was not primarily concerned with the theological aspects of the Anabaptists. His chief aim was to relate in laymen's language the personal and practical piety of the Mennonites of all times and all groups as a challenge for our day. This he did with a keen knowledge of the economic, political, and cultural background not only of the groups he described, but also of the total environment in which the Mennonites lived. The chief fruit of his labor was *The Story of the Mennonites,* which has been reprinted many times and will continue to inspire generations to come.

His deep-seated convictions can easily be detected on every page of his writings, including his autobiography. He is generous, understanding, and tolerant, but never loses sight of the basic faith, principles, and motivations of the early Anabaptists. Because of his love and devotion to this cause, he stayed in the brotherhood and promoted the Anabaptist ideals in teaching and writing and as a leader of Conference organizations.

Mennonite Country Boy was written when the author was fifty years of age. The author describes his youth, education, and early career as teacher up to the point where he obtained his Ph.D. degree at the University of Chicago and met the "beautiful, brown-eyed girl," Laura Ioder, whom he later married. Only fifty mimeographed copies of the autobiography were distributed in 1943 among close relatives and friends. Selections from three chapters appeared in the January 1946 issue of *Mennonite Life* under the title, "I Find My Life Work." Later, provision was made for the publishing of the autobiography. Frank D. King and particularly Mrs. C. Henry Smith, executives of the estate trust, made the necessary financial arrangements for printing the manuscript. John F. Schmidt of the Bethel College Historical Library, Irvin E. Richert, and the staff of Faith and Life Press have helped with the preparation of the manuscript, which appears as a volume in the Historical Series of the General Conference Mennonite Church. The Historical Committee, which sponsors this series, is composed of Cornelius J. Dyck, Delbert L. Gratz, Cornelius Krahn, Gerhard Lohrenz, and Menno Schrag.

The articles at the back of the book, written by Harold S. Bender, Willard H. Smith, and Nelson P. Springer, contain additional information about the life and work of C. Henry Smith. They were originally printed in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Volume XXII, January 1949. A number of supplementary articles appeared in the April 1950 issue of *Mennonite Life*: N. E. Byers, "C. Henry Smith As I Knew Him"; Carl M. Lehman, "Smith As A Businessman"; and Cornelius Krahn, "A Life That Made A Difference."

North Newton, Kansas
July 1961

Cornelius Krahn

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1

Mennonite Forebears

IF THE VALUE of an autobiography is to be measured by the importance of the autobiographer, there is little excuse for this story. I lay no claim to greatness; I never held high office; I never wrote a great book; I never performed a spectacular deed; all through my life I have been just an average citizen with average life experiences. Just that and nothing more. But in this very fact I hope to find justification for the following pages. The overwhelming majority of us are just that—ordinary folks.

I have long held the theory that the average reader is more interested in life experiences common to us all than in the exceptional and spectacular achievements of the few which to him are impossible except in his dreams. Then, too, I realize that most of my readers will come from the same religious group within which my own boyhood days were spent; and these I hope will find some historical interest in the social and religious practices of the group prevalent during the period covered in the following pages. If any further justification were needed for this narrative it might be found in the inner urge which I have felt for some years to commit to paper some of the pleasant memories of boyhood days which have followed me all through life, and which, although growing dimmer with advancing years, I have never been quite able to banish from my mind. This latter fact, to be sure, may not be adequate justification nor satisfactory excuse for burdening the reading public, already overwhelmed with a plethora of the lives of the great and near great, with another story of one who does not even claim near greatness; but it is, nevertheless, perhaps its chief explanation. In common with autobiographers in general I begin my early life history with a brief account of my ancestry.

I am a thoroughbred Mennonite. For one hundred and fifty years at least, and perhaps for several hundred more beyond that, my ancestors were of the Mennonite faith and race. I say *race* deliberately; for, like the Jews and unlike most other religious and social groups, Mennonites were not only a group of people having a common religious faith, but, possessed with a strong spirit of nonconformity to prevailing religious doctrines and social practices engendered through centuries of relentless persecution, they had developed in course of time not only a spiritual homogeneity, but a physical solidarity as well, which, through a process of inbreeding, had accumulated many of the characteristics of a distinct human type. By the middle of the sixteenth century Mennonitism ceased to expand. If my Mennonite ancestry reaches back as far as that of most of the group, I doubt whether a single non-Mennonite could be found among all my forebears during the past four hundred years. And so, physically and spiritually, I claim to be a full-blooded Mennonite.

But who are the Mennonites? They are the lineal and spiritual descendants of the Anabaptists, who in turn formed the liberal wing of the Reformation movement in Switzerland, among such friends of Zwingli as insisted that the Zurich reformer did not go far enough in his break with the Catholic church in his reforming work. Especially did these reformers of a reformation demand that the new church should be a voluntary establishment based on free and intelligent membership, complete separation of church and state, and absolute religious toleration—doctrines taken for granted everywhere today, but new and strictly forbidden then, four hundred years ago. Like the Quakers some years later, the Anabaptists made much of love as a solvent of such social ills as result from human passions. Life was too sacred to be snuffed out at the hands of an individual seeking vengeance, or by state authority, either by courts of law or by force of arms. War, especially, to them seemed unchristian. Mennonites were often called the revengeless Christians. Even their worst enemies recognized their sober character, peaceful and upright life, and moral integrity. Their whole social program, in short, was the Sermon on the Mount completely and literally accepted.

But the doctrine of religious toleration, implying separation of state and church, was too far advanced for that day. Needless to say, these harmless folk were burned at the stake by the thousands, sold as galley slaves, and hounded from one land to another for the better part of a whole century. As a result, Anabaptism soon spread across the Swiss border into southern Germany, down the Rhine valley, and out across the Netherlands where a converted monk, Menno Simons, assumed leadership of the movement and gave it his name. Large and flourishing congregations were rapidly established throughout all these regions. In course of time, however, the movement was stamped out along the middle Rhine, leaving Switzerland at one end and Holland at the other as the centers from which Mennonites later spread across Germany and America. My own ancestry came from the Swiss and South German group.

A period of renewed persecution in Switzerland during the latter part of the seventeenth century and the forepart of the eighteenth drove many Swiss Mennonites once more across the border into the German Palatinate, and into Alsace-Lorraine, then under French rule. Here they were tolerated, with restricted civil and religious rights, up to the time of the French Revolution. During this entire period, beginning with the first settlement at Germantown in 1683, a constant stream of Palatine Mennonites kept trickling into Pennsylvania until well toward the time of the American Revolution.

The Napoleonic wars again severely tested the peace principles of such Mennonites as had remained along the French frontier and in neighboring lands. Immediately after the Congress of Vienna and especially after the revolutionary year of 1830, hundreds of them from Switzerland, Alsace-Lorraine, and South Germany—young men and women for the most part—driven by economic necessity as well as their peace principles—sought a new home in free America, locating on the frontier lands of the Mississippi valley and Upper Canada. The Alsatians and Lotharingians, many of whom were mostly of the conservative Amish wing of the church, settled in the early thirties in central

Illinois along the bottom lands of the Illinois River just across the river from what is now Peoria, but then called Fort Clark.

Central Illinois at this time was hardly more than a howling wilderness. It is said that a log cabin erected by a frontiersman on the east side of the river in 1822 was the first white habitation between Fort Clark and Lake Michigan. As for villages, there was no sign of one by 1830 as far east as the state line; and, with the exception of perhaps a military post or two, none to the west as far as the Pacific Coast. Soon after, however, settlers' cabins sprang up rapidly along the banks of the Illinois and its tributaries, the Black Partridge, the Mackinaw, and Ten Mile Run. The Amish, therefore, who began their settlement near Fort Clark in 1831 were among the real pioneers in this region. By the time of the Civil War the western half of what is now Woodford County and a good portion of Tazewell County, the wooded area, were pretty well filled up. But few families had yet had the courage to pitch their tents on the open prairies to the east. The Amish settlers located along the creeks that flow into the Illinois from the east—the Black Partridge, Ten Mile Run, and along the river-bottom land near Spring Bay, at that time a stopping point for the big river steamers and a better market than Peoria, but now, because it was missed by the railroad, a forlorn village.

The center of the social life of this pioneer settlement as well as its outlet to the world beyond was along the angling stage road which, starting from Fort Clark and following the watershed between Ten Mile Run and the Partridge tributaries, turned at the end of the timbered belt in a northeastern direction toward the infant village of Chicago on Lake Michigan, some hundred and forty miles away. Along this road were founded the first small villages, Germantown in the timberland, and Hanover—now Metamora—along the edge of the prairie, which later was destined to become the county seat, where for years in the primitive old courthouse, still standing, Abraham Lincoln, Robert Ingersoll, Vice-President Adlai Stevenson, and other notables of that day were wont to plead the cause of obscure country folk in trouble; and the road houses, Sharps Corner, Union House, and Hickory Point, where later the prairie farmer on his way to the river market always stopped to water his tired horses and did not forget his own thirst.

Among these pioneers my grandfather, Christian Smith, was one of the very first. A native of Lorraine, France, he arrived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1829, and in the Partridge colony in 1833. With him came also one sister, Mary. My grandfather Smith died when I was one year old, and my grandmother still earlier, so I never knew either of them. Not being interested in family history as a boy, I never inquired of my father concerning the details of his family tree. Consequently, only a few stray facts have been preserved of our family origins.

Grandfather Smith was born in 1800, somewhere in Lorraine, France, but just where I have never been able to discover—likely near Metz, however, since I remember hearing my father speak of that city more frequently and more familiarly than of any other. My great grandfather, also called Christian, was a miller and, according to tradition, was accidentally killed in a mill the very year my grandfather was born. These few meager facts exhaust the data available for building up a family genealogy. Some years ago, following the suggestion of a French Mennonite who had come to America in 1874 that a Mennonite miller by the name of Smith had once lived in the little village of Guermange, near Dieuze, I visited the place. With the help of the local mayor, I discovered in the town records that as early as 1816 a certain John Smith, a Mennonite, then aged 43, lived here with children bearing such familiar names as Christian, Peter, and Mary. Whether or not this family was of my tribe I do not know; but, since the name *Smith* of German origin was very rare among the French Mennonites, it is altogether possible that this is the section of Lorraine from which my forebears came.

Christian Smith's wife belonged to the family of Baechler, but of her I have no other information whatever.

My grandfather was said to be short of stature, of sturdy build, even-tempered, and possessed of more than an ordinary sense of humor. Soon after his arrival in Illinois, he located on an uncleared timber farm along Partridge Creek in what is now Worth Township about six miles northwest of the present village of Metamora, where my father John Smith was born in 1843.

My mother's maiden name was Magdalene Schertz. Her family history, too, is shrouded in obscurity. The Schertz tribe, no doubt, is of Swiss origin. The earliest record of the name I have been able to find is that of Peter Scherz who in the Canton of Berne proposed to migrate to Pennsylvania in 1742. Whether or not he actually arrived is not known; but a Johan Heinrich Schertz landed in Philadelphia on the boat *Elizabeth and Francis* in September 1742. So far as the records show, this is the only Schertz to emigrate to America during the eighteenth century. Numerous members of the family, however, came to Illinois and Ohio during the early part of the past century.

According to Ludwig Schertz of Strassburg, a man well versed in the Schertz family lore, all who bear that name in Lorraine are of the same family, Swiss as to origin, and Amish-Mennonite as to religious faith, although through marriage Catholic and Evangelical offshoots have developed. A number of small villages near Saarburg seem to be the French ancestral homes from which the American branch of the family came. Many of them seemingly were millers by occupation, some of them quite well to do. Tradition says that a number of them lost heavily during the French Revolution. The name is unusual today in Lorraine. Such common surnames as Joseph, David, Christian, Andrew, and Nicholas both here and there indicate the original unity of the family on both sides of the ocean.

The first of my mother's direct line to come to America was my great grandfather who arrived in the Partridge settlement in 1837, although others of the tribe had migrated to the same general region a few years earlier. Nothing is known of him except the fact that he died soon after his arrival and the tradition that he was buried on what was then his farm, but which now forms the crossroad near Germantown where the Germantown and the Hoshor roads meet, just at the foot of the old cemetery hill.

My grandfather Schertz, whose given name was David, too, died young, in 1852, leaving a widow and children to carry on as well as they could. My grandmother Schertz, of the Bachman family, was the only one of my four grandparents that I knew. She lived with us for a number of years, but died during my early childhood. Her original home had been along the old stage road just across from the old Partridge meetinghouse.

Here my mother was born in 1843, and here she was married to my father near the close of the Civil War. A few years later my parents moved to a farm on the prairies along the Roanoke Road just three miles east of the village of Metamora.

2

Childhood Recollections

I WAS BORN on the prairie farm near Metamora, the third in the family of eight, in the year that ushered in the last quarter of the past century. And here my childhood years were spent. My early recollections are few and dim. It was only an occasional experience that for some unexplainable reason impressed my plastic child mind sufficiently to leave a permanent picture.

My earliest recollection is that of a small boy, still wearing a short dress of a dark brown color, walking from the house toward the front gate which leads to the barnyard. Around his neck he wears a long cord to which is attached the rusty lid of an old ink well, a relic from an old school desk, no doubt, brought from school by my older brother. The cord and ink well are a watch and chain. The boy is playing man and exhibits both a fine example of childish vanity and an important pedagogical principle. I presume I was three or four years old.

In a second picture I see myself sitting in a big arm chair in the living room out at Aunt Lizzie's, watching a group of women, including my mother, seated around a quilting frame, busily plying their needles and as busily chattering as they work. The occasion is a barn raising at Uncle John's. These old-fashioned barn raisings usually required the united effort of a large number of men. On such occasions, more often than not, work was done with pleasure, the women usually accompanying their men. While the latter were busy outside, the former engaged themselves inside the house with an unusual enterprise well adapted to co-operative effort, and at the same time conducive to pleasant social intercourse—usually a quilting.

It was a bright spring day; and, as I sat and watched the women at their work and listened to their talk, I could distinctly hear through the open windows the "hee-o-hee" of my father, usually a leader in neighborhood affairs of this sort, as he directed the united efforts of the men as with long poles they followed the heavy beams that were being hoisted into the air. The only other incident of the day that seemingly made an impression on me was the sumptuous dinner at noon of mashed potatoes and dandelion and a new drink, dark in color and put in bottles, called "pop." There is no reason why I should remember how old I was, but the date, 1880, painted on one of the pillars of the bank barn noticed some years later would indicate that I was in my fifth year.

A brief glimpse of my start to school in my sixth year practically exhausts the picture gallery of my early childhood memories. My mother, to whom the day was as important as to me, no doubt, now packing the dinner pail for two instead of one as she had done the year before, carefully instructed my older brother Sam to look after all my needs during this first day, and especially to give me an apple during recess. *Recess* was a new word for me. I evidently was wont to think in terms of pictures; for *recess* suggested something blue, dotted with white stars, like the blue part of the flag, but just what I do not recall.

Except for a faint recollection of brightly colored slate pencils and the peculiar smell of printer's ink on my yellow book called a primer my first few years in school are largely blank. The next five or six years, however, are easier to recover; and, although individual scenes may blend into one another, and it is hard sometimes to distinguish the actual from the imaginary, the impression of the whole is quite distinct. As I look back now upon these days through the afterglow of years, I have a very definite impression that the small boy on the farm lives close to the great heart of nature. My most distinct recollections are all associated with the out-of-doors. The world in which I lived was made up largely of birds, trees, meadows, glorious days of sunshine, nights of full moon, and soft winds rustling through the big leaves of the cottonwoods or sighing through the pines. Rainy days, no doubt, and stormy nights there were plenty, but I do not remember them. Only the bright and joyous face of nature left an impression on my memory. What a glorious world to grow up in. Pity the town boy whose only plaground is a dirty back alley, who never took part in a bumble bee fight nor helped to snare the ground squirrel, who never heard the cheery evening whistle of the bobwhite nor the morning song of the thrush as he poured out the joy of his heart from the topmost bough of the apple tree near the house, who never knew the thrill of catching his first small minnow from the neighboring brook. Such a boy has never tasted the joys of boyhood life. It is only the country boy grown to manhood who can appreciate the lines from Wordsworth:

> There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
>   To me did seem
>   Appareled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.

My earliest geographic childhood world was confined largely to the house and barn lot and surrounding pastures and meadows, with an occasional excursion to the neighbors or nearby relatives. Fortunately for me, our prairie farm still retained much of its original primitive character. The gigantic cottonwoods and tall willows that had been planted by the pioneer settlers all about the barnyard and cow lot were still standing strong and vigorous. The pasture lot just east of the barn was still virgin sod on which the buffalo had once fed and which had never felt the cutting of the plowshare. Here in the far corner was the never-quite-dry "slough," where the tall wild grass grew, a rendezvous for snakes and the home of frogs, whose nightly chorus wafted across the fields through our open bedroom windows and furnished the music to which we went to sleep after many a hard spring day's work.

Farmers in our community were just beginning to drain their land at this time; but our farm was still untiled. Back of our barn ran a small stream hardly more than a draw, which began in our neighbor's field above us and emptied into Walnut Creek in my uncle's farm just below. This stream was fed by a number of springs which seemed to keep up a small rivulet of clear water in even the driest weather; in times of rain the "crick" often became a raging torrent for a few hours.

Many of my earliest and most pleasant recollections cluster about this little creek and the willows that grew along its banks. Here my brothers, Sam and Johnie, and I spent whole days building miniature dams to turn primitive water wheels, or trying to coax the tiny minnows to bite on the worms stuck upon our improvised fishhooks. In the spring and early summer hundreds of barn swallows darted back and forth from the muddy banks to the eaves of the barn underneath which a long row of mud nests had been stuccoed. These nests when dry became quite brittle. It was a favorite pastime of ours to test on them our skill as expert marksmen. Occasionally by a lucky throw we broke the nest into a hundred pieces, bringing down mud, eggs, birds, and all. Fortunately for the birds, however, successful shots were few and far between. A twelve-inch tile was finally laid under the bed of the stream, and the creek itself dried up. And with the drying of the creek, the willows disappeared, and the swallows also. But it was some years before it occurred to me that there was any connection between the passing of the water and the birds at the same time.

The cottonwoods and willows that were scattered all about our homestead, too, must have contributed largely to our childhood pleasures. I can still recover a few giant glimpses of myself and brothers and occasionally cousin Ben under the shade of two big trees just south of the house where the shop later stood, playing mumbletypeg; or sometimes merely lying on our backs in the cool shade of a summer afternoon, watching the redheaded woodpecker bore a nest in a rotten branch in the extreme top of the tree, in the meantime listening to the rustling of the wind through the large-leaved foliage and casting a suspicious eye at a bottle of water which my older brother Joe had placed in a crotch just beyond reach, in which could be seen a long black hair from the tail of one of the work horses. This hair, we were informed, would eventually grow into a full-fledged snake.

At the far end of the pasture half a mile from the house and just across from the schoolyard stood another pair of cottonwoods under whose welcome shade we occasionally played hookey and with our schoolmates whiled away many an hour of idle talk which we could have spent more profitably in the schoolroom. For some years this was a favorite gathering place where we met our playmates on holidays and Sundays to relive past achievements or plan future exploits. We would have been glad to continue these meetings indefinitely, but there came an evil day when the farmers of our community became convinced that farm land had become too valuable to permit the existence of trees for any reason other than utility. Either they had to bear fruit or protect the milk cows from the heat of the noonday sun, and even in the latter case the only proper place for them would be in the barren cow lot where their cool shade could not interfere with growing grass. And so these grand old cottonwoods around which clustered so many of our pleasant childhood memories fell victim to the woodman's ax one after another until only a few were left about the barn lot. Even these are now passing, victims of disease, old age, and storms. I felt their loss keenly; every time one was cut down or destroyed from some other cause, it affected me like the passing of an old friend.

One quarter mile west of the house stood the "old orchard" which in an earlier day had served as the homestead of a pioneer settler and neighbor by the name of Frank Bride. When my father bought this farm he moved the little one-story house from the orchard to our own barnyard where for years it served as a "shop," a very important accession to the group of farm buildings and full of interest to the small boy.

This old orchard was completely surrounded, as were so many of the early prairie homesteads, by a windbreak in the form of a row of willow trees. In the course of years these willows had been cut back several times and the long branches laid horizontally between the original trees completely around the square. The trunks of the original trees, sprouting again, grew through and high above the horizontal layers, thus making of the whole enclosure a thickly matted network of willows and giving it the appearance of a frontier Indian stockade. This stockade was a paradise for birds in the summer and for rabbits and small game in the winter.

In one corner of the enclosure there was an open well near the site of the former dwelling; a little to the left, a row of tall walnut trees, which we had occasion to remember each fall about nut-picking time because of our deeply stained hands and in the wintertime for the store of luscious nuts which with cider and apples contributed largely to the pleasures of many a long winter evening when neighbors or cousins dropped in for a casual visit.

The orchard itself still contained all the old favorites. In one corner were the Bellflowers—big, yellow, and a little tart—in another, the Maiden Blushes, rightly so named. The winter apples, Winesaps and Ben Davises, which had to be picked from the tree and not from the ground a little later in the season, were scattered throughout the orchard. In the center were the sweet apples reserved for apple butter. Nearby, too, was the persimmon tree which we recommended to unsuspecting visitors just to see them pucker their lips when they bit into the tempting but treacherous yellow fruit.

Apples were regarded as more of a necessity on the farm table in those days than now. Nearly every farmer had his cellar filled with bins of apples and barrels of cider for winter consumption, while his summer kitchen was stored with dried apples and his pantry with jars of apple butter.

The decay of these first apple orchards, the introduction of new fruits like the banana and the grapefruit, and changes in the tastes of men—all these have been responsible for the passing of the apple basket and the cider jug from the hospitable firesides of the Illinois farmers.

This old deserted site of a former homestead was a romantic spot for us boys, the direct goal when in quest of unusual adventure. Here we learned many of the secrets of nature and the ways of bird and beast; that the nest of the thrush was built low in the thicket, and the blackbird's in the tree; the robin's eggs were blue, and the turtledove's white; the best way to trap the rabbit, and the favorite haunts of the mink. The old well, too, was an object of superstitious awe. We were told that in the bottom there lived an old man with a long hook whose chief aim was to draw in small boys if they approached too near, and especially if they disobeyed their parents. There were occasions when we gave the old landmark a wide berth.

The old orchard has long since disappeared to make way for fields of corn and oats. The well has been filled up, and there is not a single reminder that this was once the site of a happy playground. The song of the thrush has given way to the rattle of the reaper; instead of the barefooted boy wandering through the soft blue grass under the shade of apple trees and armed with a slingshot, looking for big game, there is the weary plowman, trudging back and forth along the dusty cornrows under a hot July sun, dreaming, perhaps, of happier days gone by.

My brothers, Sam and Johnie, were, no doubt, often with me in these adventures, but I do not remember my associates as well as the trees and birds. Joe, seven years older, did not enter my play life at all during this period. Neither did my younger sisters. When I was ten, Katie was six; Martha, four; Emma, two; and Ella, a baby in the cradle. The most distinct recollections I have of them now are of their childish prattle as it came from the kitchen through the open stair door to our room on certain calm Sunday mornings when we were permitted to lie in bed a little longer than on working days; or of special crises as when Katie fell down the front porch steps, in her hands an open tin can which cut an ugly gash into her forehead, causing the blood to spurt out on the stone walk; or sometimes on occasions when they interfered with my personal liberty, as when one late summer evening while lying on my back on the dining-room floor trying to rock Emma to sleep, her insistence to remain awake kept me from making an excursion to the meadow from which I could distinctly hear the humming of the clover huller through the open window.

Besides my brothers, my most constant companions were my cousin Ben and the Cook boys who lived just across the road from Ben's house. The Cook boys were more or less the bullies of the school and the neighborhood, who were usually respected but never loved. Whatever they wanted, they took. On one occasion, however, I felt that I had outwitted them.

This was just the time when steam threshers were being introduced into our community. The coming of the steam engine in threshing time was just about the biggest event of the year, and every farm boy wanted to be an engineer. Several of my cousins, the Camp boys, unusually inclined toward mechanics, had built a miniature engine and thresher with smokestack, traction wheels, concave, stacker, and everything, all of wood, of course, and run with a crank instead of steam, but a perfectly satisfactory model of the real thing to the young make-believe threshermen. The Camp boys had a number of followers, including myself and the Cooks. Among the various parts that I had gathered for the grand assembling were two small wagon wheels to be used as master wheels on the rear of my engine. Henry Cook, too, took a liking to these wheels for his own master effort and offered to buy them from me for a fish-hook and a pocketknife, but I refused to part with them. What he couldn't buy he decided to take by force. So one day two of the boys with cousin Ben, who was frequently an accomplice of theirs in their buccaneering adventures, came down to our house, deliberately picked up my wheels, and walked home. I was not of a pugnacious disposition; and, at any rate, three to one would have made any protest entirely useless. I was determined to regain my property, however, by means fair or foul.

Several days later I visited the Cooks with the deliberate purpose of recovering my own. I found the three boys busy at work near the old shop, putting together their engine, but with the precious wheels fortunately about ten feet away. I laid my plans accordingly, seating myself near the object of my designs without arousing the suspicion of the boys, in the meantime engaging them in a discussion about some subject which I no longer remember. I knew, of course, that a numerical handicap of three to one would make it impossible to carry out my purpose by force of arms; but with a little headwork I might succeed by force of legs. Watching my opportunity, and when I thought them most completely off their guard, I hurriedly snatched up the wheels, jumped up, and started down the yard to the road on my half-mile race home.

I had taken the boys completely unawares. Before they realized what had happened I had a start of perhaps forty or fifty feet. It was a desperate chance. I was not afraid of Ben; I knew he could not run, for I had often outrun him in a foot race. But Henry, several years older and stronger than I, was equally as fleet-footed. I had several advantages, however;

first was my slight lead, and then I was on the defensive, and our school history said that in the Civil War one soldier on the defensive was equal to three on the offensive side. I knew it was to be a race to the finish. The realization of what would happen to both my wheels and to myself if I failed to keep my early lead in this race of three against one was perhaps my strongest advantage. Both of us were barefooted. As we reached the dusty road I could distinctly hear the patter of my pursuers' feet, though I could not hear my own. I did not dare look back, but for the first forty rods the sound seemed to be coming nearer.

I distinctly remember that race for life; and it has often since reminded me of the famous ride of Ichabod Crane on the night the goblin was after him. Halfway between our house and Cooks's was the Wüthrich home, which it seemed to me marked the boundary between enemy and friendly territory. If I could only reach the Wüthrich home, I thought, I could outdistance my adversary from then on; for the nearer I approached my own home, the more my courage would rise, while the morale of my enemy would decrease as the distance from his own home increased. It turned out as I expected. Ben and Henry's older brother had evidently given up the race early. From the Wüthrich house on, Henry seemed to be losing, and by the time I reached the bridge just twenty rods from our front gate he gave up the pursuit. But I did not dare stop until I had safely reached our barnyard. Throwing myself upon the grass, thoroughly exhausted, and looking up I saw Henry just beyond the bridge, making ugly signs with his fingers to his nose. The wheels later graced my own Gar Scott engine rather than Henry Cook's.

The geographic boundaries of my boy world, although expanding from year to year, remained confined within rather narrow limits. To the south we seldom had occasion to go beyond Uncle Joe Lehman's farm, although we had heard of the Mount Zion Church four miles beyond. To the west, three miles away, was our trading town, Metamora, on the edge of which began a land of romance, the timber land, with hills and hollows and creeks extending as far as the Illinois River some twenty miles away. To the north we could see a long ridge of hills, which I later learned were gravel hills—glacial moraines, perhaps, topped by a row of tall poplars which seemed far away, but in reality were only a few miles away. To the east stretched another unknown country without limit—prairies still newer than our own. We had occasionally traveled in this direction as far as Roanoke six miles away to purchase coal from a local coal mine for our winter stove and for summer threshing. A little to the northwest of here, in the Dutch settlement, we had once seen the big Dutch windmill, a landmark known throughout all the region.

Occasionally we were permitted a glimpse into the regions beyond our own immediate little world. One such adventure was the periodical visit we made to the home of my uncle, John Sommers, in the timberland some eight or ten miles away. We spoke of his home as being in the "bottom" because of its location along Partridge Creek, surrounded by hills that were mere bluffs, rising above the banks of the creek which had washed its way down to its present level. This visit possessed all the thrills of a great adventure. It was usually a family affair or at least as much of the family was included as could be accommodated by our six-seated open buggy. We were glad that Mother could always be included. Her household duties were so exacting and her vacations so few that we were especially glad when she could enjoy an occasional well-earned rest.

The entire trip with its glimpse of a wholly new world was full of interest to us boys. I remember, especially, one of these visits we made one fine Saturday afternoon in June. Instead of following every section line as it did on the prairie, the road just west of Metamora began to curve around the hills and bend along the creeks, leading we knew not into what unexpected corners. A winding road has always had a strong fascination for me. You can never tell where it leads nor what surprises may lie just ahead. All nature here took on a grander aspect than on the prairie. The tall, spreading elms and rough, sturdy oaks looked like giants by the side of our prairie willows and cottonwoods. The blue jay, flitting from one fence rail to another, was a revelation to us. His voice may seem sharp and shrill to some; but to me it is real music, because it suggests woods and hills which are always a source of interest to the boy brought up on the flat and monotonous prairies. The big brown timber squirrel with his big bushy tail, jumping from the farthest branch of one tree to the top of another, chattering as he leaped along, was so much more of an acrobat than the modest little striped ground squirrel that we knew on the prairie. To go up the steep hills and down the sharp descent on the other side gave us a real thrill. Our prairie buggy was not equipped with brakes to check the rapid descent of the horses as they hurried to the bottom of the decline at an alarming increase of speed. Mother, especially, was afraid to risk the buggy over these dangerous passages. She made us all get out and walk with her until we reached the level road once more, while Father remained with the team, thus greatly impressing us with the real risks of the undertaking and at the same time increasing our respect for Father's skill and bravery. He always loomed as a hero among us after negotiating one of these difficult hills.

My uncle's house lay off the main road, if you can call the trail that led through the timber in his direction a main road. For the last mile or so we had to follow the creek bed and cross it once or twice, an easy matter in ordinary times, but not without its seeming risks when the water was high, as it was on this particular occasion. The dashing of the timid prairie-bred horses' bodies deep into the swift current, the crunching of the steel-tired wheels on the graveled bottom gave us a new sensation and filled us with an imaginary fear far beyond what was justified by the actual danger encountered.

We were given a royal welcome at the end of our journey. The house was located in a lonely spot along the creek, and few visitors passed that way. The mere passing of a farm wagon along the water trail was an occasion of interest to the whole family; but to get company was an event long to be remembered. My father, being the only son in his family among a number of daughters, was adored by his sisters; and so Aunt Anna was doubly glad to see him. To him, too, this trip was of special pleasure, because it was a return to the old homestead, his birthplace, and the romping ground of his boyhood.

Uncle John was the only one of my uncles who never had the ambition to leave the timber lands of the pioneers for the more fertile and civilized prairies. We always regarded the timber dwellers as a little less civilized than those on the prairies. We boys could always tell the "timber rats" (as we called them) passing our prairie home by their scrawny horses and their dilapidated wagons, to say nothing about the shabby appearance of the drivers. They even spoke a language of their own.

"How did you find the crick?" asked my uncle after the first expressions of surprise had been exchanged as we drove into the barnyard. "Pretty high," replied my father. "I coulda tole you the crick wasn't safe if you'd a ast me; you orter a come over the big hill," added my uncle with a side glance at my mother who seemed to agree with him in spite of the fact that she had objected to the big hill referred to. "How could I ask you since I haven't seen you for a month?" said my father, in what seemed a clinching and final answer. "Wal, you orter knowed that arter such a big rain the water would be high in the crick, by gollies," was the final rejoinder. Uncle John always had a way of ending any argument with "by gollies." And so, with these introductory remarks, the two men, each leading a horse, walked toward the old log barn, which my grandfather had built more than fifty years before, and which was still serving as the only stable on the old homestead.

The evening was particularly beautiful, much more so than evenings on the prairie. The sun sank out of sight behind the western hills long before it set, casting the long evening shadows across the little valley in which the farm buildings were enclosed, thus prolonging that most charming and restful part of the day on the farm called evening twilight. From all around unusual sounds met our ears: the tinkling of cow bells from the wooded hills, and the bleating of sheep from the barn lot.

As the evening twilight gradually deepened into the mysterious darkness of the night, we sat on the lawn under the big elm tree near the house, listening to the sound of baying hounds as it came to us through the darkness from the hollow to the west. Our cousins told us that the hounds were perhaps treeing a coon, or even tracking a wolf. For several hours they related thrilling stories of fox hunts and wolf adventures. We went to bed at a late hour with a keen sense of anticipation of the day to come when we might run over the hills and through the woods in search of such unusual sights as might turn up.

Sunday forenoon we spent mostly along the creek, admiring the magnificent elms along its banks, exploring the deep holes where the fish were found and marveling at the many colored "nigger heads" strewn all along the course, wishing all the time that our little prairie "crick" were as interesting as this. My last recollection of this visit to Uncle John's was the call by our Metamora doctor early in the afternoon, who had come down to buy some arrowheads which our cousins had collected for him. The drive home in the afternoon likely was not of interest, for I do not remember anything of it. The exploring spirit had evidently been satisfied by this time.

It was about this time, too, that we first began to hear of the land of Kansas, a magical word among my relatives in the late eighties. Several wet years, following a series of dry ones, started a land boom which the land agents were not slow in taking advantage of. Uncle Joe, my mother's younger brother, was the first of our relationship to catch the fever. Fortunately for him, but unfortunately for his relatives and friends, he had bought a piece of land in Reno County which he soon sold at a handsome profit largely because of the surveying of a railroad nearby. This easy money at a time when money making on Illinois farms was not an easy matter excited many of his friends to emulate his achievement. What Uncle Joe did, of course, they could do, too. Many of his friends and relatives, including my father, made frequent trips in the late eighties to the land of sunshine and promise, and many purchased a section or two of land. For several years Wichita, Hutchinson, Larned, Ness City, and Wakeeney, the county seat of Trego County where my father finally bought a section of virgin prairie, were familiar names to us.

Usually my father brought home with him from these trips jack rabbit ears, buffalo horns, and stories of prairie dog villages as relics from a strange new country; and reports of fine land that was just as productive as our home farm. The section he bought at four dollars an acre was just as fine as any hundred-dollar farm in Illinois, he said. All they needed was rain, and that would come with the march of westward settlements. But the rain never came. The few wet years were again followed by ten of extreme drought. We heard stories of hot winds that would cook the corn in the course of a single afternoon. I remember hearing a song some years later written by a Kansas humorist of the period, lamenting in the strains of a well-known hymn the hardships of these lean years.

We're in the land of drouth and heat,
    Where nothing ever grows to eat;
The winds do blow, with burning heat,
    And oh, this land is hard to beat.

Oh, Kansas Land, Sweet Kansas Land,
    As on thy burning grounds I stand
I look away across the plains,
    And wonder why it never rains;
But when I hear old Gabriel's sound,
    I'll know the rains have gone around.

We have no wheat, we have no oats,
    We have no corn to feed the shoats;
Our chickens are too poor to eat,
    The pigs go squealing through the street.

Our horses are of broncho race,
    Starvation stares them in the face;
We do not live, we only stay,
    We are too poor to get away.

Many of our acquaintances who had moved to Kansas soon left for more favorable regions. Some, too poor to get away, had to remain, and after staying out the years of drought finally became prosperous. My father's farm, however, was too far west, beyond the rain belt, to raise a crop. He finally traded it in on another farm near home at a considerable loss. A number of our neighbors bought in the same general belt and were equally unfortunate. But Uncle Joe reinvested in Reno County, and in course of time reaped another appreciable increase by the rise in land values in that section.

And so passed the years of childhood—all too quickly. And with each passing year my world grew larger, and my life interests more varied. An occasional trip to Peoria—our nearest metropolis—twenty miles away with my father for the purpose of laying in the year's supply of coats and redtopped boots not so easily obtainable in our local store was an educational adventure. After an interesting ride through the timber road passing by Hickory Point and Germantown, we reached the big wooden bridge across the Illinois River where once we saw the *Bald Eagle* belching out a cloud of black smoke from a tall smokestack, rushing on its way to St. Louis. The wonders of the big city itself—with its hustle and activity, its streetcars, big courthouse, and fine stores we devoured with eyes and ears and mouths open wide. Especially interesting to us was the fine display of overcoats, hats, and other boys' goods we saw and tried on in the store of A. Schradski, who advertised himself as the "One-priced Store" at a time when it was still customary and expected even in our own local store for the purchaser to bargain with the dealer in an attempt to lower the exorbitant prices first asked.

Each winter Father would take a load of cattle to Chicago and on his return relate the marvels of the still greater city—the big stockyards where they killed thousands of hogs every day—Swift, Armour, Cudahy were all familiar names to us; the Palmer House where our banker, little Pete Schertz, so called to distinguish him from several bigger Petes, used to put up when in the city; and a big building—perhaps the highest in the world—twelve stories high, called the Masonic Temple. Once he brought home a small catalogue full of wonderful things that you could buy through the mail if you had the money—steam engines, bicycles, guns, soldier caps, and many other things dear to the heart of the average small boy. The name on the front cover of this wonderful catalogue was Montgomery Ward.

In school the little geographies that we studied told us that a good many of the notions we had about the world in which we lived were wrong. The earth was not flat as we had always thought, but round; and earth and sky did not meet in the distance at a place where you could jump off, but only seemed to come together at a place called the horizon. The stars, too, were very large, much larger than a wagon as I had imagined, perhaps as large as the earth itself. In every direction I had to reconstruct the little world in which I had been living. Often bewildered and confused by the shattering of these beliefs of my childhood, life, nevertheless, seemed pretty much of a pleasant adventure. The days I remember best were all beautiful, golden days, and my world a fairy world. Dark days, no doubt, of distress and illness there were, too, but these I have largely forgotten. And even of sickness I remember best the recovery.

I was afflicted with all the usual children's diseases, with a few extras seemingly thrown in: measles, mumps, croup—I had them all. We used all the home remedies. I still abhor the taste and smell of butter because my mother during my long siege of a bad case of croup insisted that for a whole week I swallow a specially distasteful mixture of sugar and butter which was supposed to be a sure remedy for this particularly uncomfortable malady. I believe that I suffered more than usual from stomach distress, which my parents called dyspepsia; and I am not surprised at this now when I remember that a favorite breakfast dish of mine was doughnuts, dunked in coffee, which we called "coffeesoup." One time during an unusually distressful feeling following a big dinner at Uncle Pete's, I asked Ben whether he had ever had a stomach ache. "Naw," he said, "I ain't got no stomach." Although doubting the truth of his statement, I distinctly remember how I envied the boy who did not even know that he had a stomach.

But even sickness has its compensations. What a relief to wake up some fine morning after weeks of fever and distress to find that it is all gone and the world is back to normal again. How kind and good everybody is to you. What a relief to Mother, and how glad she is after weeks of anxious waiting and watching to find that the crisis is past. And how anxious she is to help along the process of recovery. One of the scenes indelibly fixed in the picture gallery of childhood memories is that of a small boy, just after a long siege of diphtheria, dressed in a fine new little overcoat purchased by my mother early in the fall season—not because it was needed just then, but to celebrate the recovery from a dangerous disease—crossing with faltering steps the living room to which he had just been transferred from the sick chamber, as proud of his new coat as he was overjoyed at his recovery.

3

The Song of the Reaper

Although not much was expected of the farm boy under ten in my day in the way of steady work, if he had no older sisters and especially if he allowed himself to be handy about the house, his mother soon saw to it that he had enough odd jobs and household chores to take up all of his spare time. I am quite sure that I spent more than the average small boy's time in turning the churn, wiping the dishes, filling the wood box, rocking the cradle, and other similar domestic services. My mother, realizing the usual unpopularity of such household tasks among small boys, was as surprised as gratified at my seeming willingness to do them. It was for this helpfulness to Mother, no doubt, that my father gave me a nice red tricycle on my tenth birthday.

This tricycle was a proud possession of mine for several years, and the envy of all my playmates. No other boy for miles around could boast of a similar treasure. That it was far better adapted to use on the streets of the city than the rough roads in the country mattered little. I seldom rode beyond the confines of our front yard. Once, however, I ventured out of bounds. One late fall afternoon when the hard dirt road that ran by our house seemed smoother than usual, and without my parents' knowing about it, I started out on an adventure to Metamora, three miles away. Going must have been rough, but I remember nothing of this juvenile exploring trip except the surprise of the town loafers as I entered the town park and told them how far I had come. I rode the old tricycle long after it had become too small for my growing legs and would have used it still longer if one of the wheels had not given way one day under the weight of my cousin Pete—"fat" Pete, we called him. I soon after converted it into a two-wheel bicycle, and so when the "safety" came into general use several years later I did not have to learn how to ride the new means of locomotion as did all the other boys.

Soon after ten, however, the farm boy was initiated into the more serious phases of farm operations. He usually began his apprenticeship in times of special need, with such useful though easy tasks as befitted his tender years. I began mine in haying time by "watching the gate" which, leading from the pasture to the hayfield, had to be kept open for the continual passage of loaded as well as empty hay wagons from the field to the barn. This was not a burdensome occupation and was an easy approach to the more monotonous and tedious farm operations.

If the cows and horses were not too insistent on finding new pastures or if he had a good dog to look after details, there was little for the boy to do but lie on his back on the soft bunches of hay that had been swept from the big loads by the gate posts and listen to the song of the meadow lark from the neighboring hay field, or gaze up at the big turkey buzzard floating about in wide circles far above, wondering how small a load of hay must look from that dizzy height; or, perhaps, if some of the neighbor boys shared the watch as sometimes they did in return for reciprocal service later on, the work might even be turned into play and the time spent in "mumbletypeg" or drowning ground squirrels. For this work my father usually gave me a nickel, just why I do not remember, for he never paid us for other later farm work.

The most strenuous season of the year was the harvesting period, which lasted only for a week or two and came in the latter part of July and early August, the hottest days of the summer. Very little wheat was grown on the prairies, and so the harvest season was confined entirely to the cutting of the oat crop. Oats was still a paying crop. The price was relatively much higher than now, largely, no doubt, because the automobile and truck had not yet replaced the horse in the city streets and on the farm. It was a busy and anxious time. It was for this harvest that the seed had been sown several months before; although beyond the sowing, the farmer's responsibility ended and that of Providence began, yet all through the spring and early summer the farmer kept up his guard against numerous unconquerable enemies, the army worm, the chinch bug, and the grasshopper, and kept an anxious though useless watch on changing skies. For it was entirely up to the weather as to how large his yield was to be. Especially during the cutting season the weather was an important factor. The crop matured rapidly and had to be harvested during that brief period. To cut it too early would result in a greatly lightened yield, while to harvest it too late would lose much of the grain. A heavy rain or windstorm at the right time would lay the field flat and thus not only lessen the yield but also double the labor of the harvesting since the grain had to be cut "one way."

How important, then, that the weather should be just right during the harvesting week. Everything else gave way, then, to the demands of the oat fields. Every member of the family was drafted to do what he could to insure the speedy gathering of the grain without any mishap. Even Rover, our big Newfoundland, felt included, for he always went into the fields with us, spending most of his time either chasing rabbits through the standing grain, or, when not otherwise busy, lying in the shade of the water wagon, catching flies. An essential part of every harvest scene that I recall from my boyhood memories is the vision of faithful old Rover, jumping high above the standing grain, trying to locate a rabbit he had chased up and following his prey across the unharvested grain, barking as he jumped.

The most common binders at that time were the McCormick and the Osborne. Uncle Joe Lehman, one of the richest and best farmers of the community, had the former, but ours was an Osborne and still bound with wire. Twine binders were getting to be common, however, among our neighbors. These my father spoke of as "Apple Bee" binders, after Appleby the inventor as I later found out. The last spool of binding wire left over from our old Osborne, a thin strong ductile wire, lay about the shop for a good many years and was used as occasion demanded for a large number of useful purposes. Self binders were still comparatively new at this time, for I remember hearing my father speak frequently of the Marsh harvester with which he had begun his farming experience not many years before. This machine had a platform on which two men could stand to bind the grain that was cut by the reaper. And then he spoke, too, of an earlier reaper which had no room for the binders, but had a platform and a series of rakes which could be manipulated by the driver so as to deposit sufficient grain in the form of unbound bundles back of the platform at his discretion. This machine, called a "self rake," was only one step removed from the original primitive McCormick reaper. The distance in time from the old hand sickle, the common instrument for the cutting of grain from Boaz and Ruth, to Cyrus McCormick to the present combine, which on the western plains cuts and threshes the grain in one operation with very little human help, is hardly more than the span of a single lifetime. During the harvesting season when lunch was served between meals, a common task for a boy was to carry the lunch basket or water jug to the workers in the field. A more serious and responsible job was to "ride the lead horse" when five horses were attached to the big wooden binder as was usually the case. The small rider was placed on the lead horse nearest the standing grain, and from this position he was supposed to direct the lead team. I remember very distinctly my first experience in this capacity. For the first half day I felt quite proud to be given this privileged position among the harvesters; but the novelty soon wore off, and a full week of such responsibility under a scorching July sun was quite enough. I was just as happy when the last field was finished as were my father and the shockers.

In the cool of the morning, when the horses were fresh, the task was not so bad; but, in the middle of the afternoon, when the horses were hot and wet, my bare legs often smarted from contact with the sweaty sides of my mount. Sometimes the other member of the team, trying to get rid of the flies that clung to his side in spite of the fly net with which he was covered, plunged violently against the horse I was riding, seriously threatening to crush my leg. The fly I dreaded most of all was the big green bottle fly as we called it. When this dreaded pest landed on a horse and began to suck the blood from a spot which the victim could reach with neither his tail nor head, the horse would try his feet. Under those conditions the rider lost complete control of his team, and anything might happen. Even old

Flora would occasionally forget her usual sedate behavior when attacked and would kick and bite and switch her tail like any two-year-old hitched up for the first time. These greenheads were respecters of neither age nor sex nor dignity.

After a field was once started and the back cut made, my father kept the binder going continually from morning till night, day after day, until the job was finished. There were no unnecessary stops; even the necessary ones used for oiling up, a bite of lunch, a drink of water, or a breathing spell for the horses in unusually hot weather were brief. All day long as I jockeyed old Flora along the edge of the standing grain, and kept her from helping herself too liberally, all I could hear was the steady rattle of the sickle bar, the rippling of the draper chains as they circled over the sprocket wheels, and the click of the binder arm as it threw out the completed bundle; and above all, the voice of my father as with the crack of his long whip he called to his horses, "Come along there Dick, Get up there Frank, hurry along, hurry along." By the end of the day he spoke hardly above a whisper.

The shockers, Joe, Steve Burk our Irish hired man, and Sam, who in the meantime had been promoted to bundle carrier, were kept equally busy. Carrying an armful of bundles from one shock to another and setting them up under a burning August sky was a hot and back-breaking task. Almost any excuse for a resting spell was welcome. Although we were all anxious to finish the task as rapidly as possible, a major breakdown in the machinery, which required a trip to Peoria some twenty miles away for repairs, was not always so disappointing to the shockers as it should have been.

We had just one hundred acres of oats to cut the year I first rode the horse; and it took us just six days of continuous driving with unusually favorable weather to finish. The last day, which happened to be a Saturday, was the one best remembered of the entire week, and one of anxiety for all of us. The skies looked threatening that morning, and we hardly expected to finish even with a fair day. All forenoon the clouds continued to thicken and the air became more sultry. We were cutting the southeast forty just across from Uncle Joe's field, which happened to be finished also that day. Imagine our joy when about two o'clock in the afternoon, after we had definitely given up all hope of finishing that day, Uncle Joe came across the field and announced that he would wind up his own in about an hour and would then come over and help us complete ours. We tore down a gap in the line fence for his binder, and soon two binders were making great headway in reducing the remnant of standing grain. Our cousins also came over to help us set up shocks. Shocking now became a sport instead of a disagreeable job. The two parties vied with each other to see which could set up its assigned station the quickest. As the field grew smaller and the time required for the tired teams to turn the corners increased, the shockers caught up and now snatched the bundles from the binders, calling on the drivers to hurry up. Old Rover was in his glory. The rabbits which had been corralled within the field of standing grain now had to scurry into the open as the narrow strip diminished. In the end, Rover had a choice of six; he chased all six and got none. Finally, late in the afternoon, the last bundle was flung from the binder; my father called "Whoa," and wiping the sweat from his forehead with his big red bandana, looked up at the sky for the first time that afternoon. "Looks a lot like rain," he said. "Let her rain," Uncle Joe replied, "Our worries are over for this year."

Thrashing usually followed close on the heels of harvest. We never said "threshing" in our community. That was left for the Yankees to the north of us. The Dutch always said "thrashing," and so thrashing it shall be here, Noah Webster notwithstanding. My first dim recollections of the thrashing season were of the old horsepower days when the separator was still run by ten or twelve horses hitched to a revolving "power." But our thrashing this year was done by a Gar Scott outfit, owned by Sam Bally, who lived some miles east of us. It took from fifteen to twenty men to keep a thrashing machine going. Some ten or twelve farmers, compactly located, would organize themselves into a club or "run," and help each other by "changing hands." Our run extended from Uncle Pete, one half mile east, to Uncle Chris Camp, some two miles to the west. The machine would start at one end of the run one year and at the other end the following. This year it started at the far end, and we were next to the last to get the machine.

Thrashing day was always one of the red-letter days in the small boy's calendar, with its crowd of neighbors, its steam engine, and its big dinners. For several days, as the machine kept coming closer from the west, we anxiously awaited its appearance. Finally, one evening Father said, "Tomorrow afternoon we will get the machine." All that afternoon we ran to the front gate every few minutes, looking down the road for the ring of smoke that foretold the coming of the engine, but we returned disappointed. When Father came home in the evening he said that due to a delay it would not come until late in the evening. We remained awake later than usual that evening, but finally went to bed with a feeling somewhat akin to that of Christmas Eve, anticipating a great surprise in the morning.

Sure enough, next morning we were awakened by the puffing of the engine in the cow lot. "Gosh, it's here," shouted Sam, who was the first to awake. Simultaneously we jumped out of bed and hurriedly seizing our pants, the only part of our daily apparel we had discarded for the night in anticipation of an early call, we managed to slip into them as we skipped down the stairs three steps at a time and emerged from the front door, fully dressed for the day in less than thirty seconds from the time we heard the first puffing of the engine.

We found Father out in the cow lot directing the thrashers where to set the separator, so as to place the stack in just the right corner of the lot. The engineer, bringing his engine in line with the cylinder pulley of the separator and trying on the big drive belt, blew a long whistle to inform the hands up and down the road that all was ready for the day's work. We gulped down our breakfast but before we had finished, the first hay rack with a pitcher had driven into the yard. Father directed them into the field, and it was not long before the first hauler drove up with a small load of bundles.

Leaning back against his lines, the driver maneuvered his skittish team by the steaming engine up to the side of the separator. The band cutter, a neighbor boy, proudly took his place by the side of the feeder; my father, who was the general manager of the day, tossed a pitchfork to the driver. Sam Bally, standing on top of the forepart of the separator with oil can in hand, like the captain on the bridge of his ship, called to the engineer, "A-1-1 right." The engineer gave his throttle a slight pull, the engine cylinder began to hiss; the big belt flip-flopped; the separator cylinder began to hum; the hauler tossed on his first bundle, and the big day's work had started.

The thrashing crew consisted of four men: the engineer, water boy, and two separator men—a tender and feeder who took turns in their work, each feeding and tending the separator part of the time. The engineer, of course, was the small boy's hero. He was regarded as a man of almost superhuman knowledge. Bally's engineer this particular year, a man by the name of Franz, was reported to have been a railroad engineer once on the T. P. and W., and thus all the more a wonder in our eyes. The height of every boy's ambition in our community about thrashing time was to be an engineer. To stand on a high platform back of the throttle of a traction engine, drawing a long train consisting of the water tank, separator, and automatic stacker, with cylinder cocks hissing out floods of steam, passing along the road with all the big folks looking on admiringly, seemed about the most heroic thing imaginable—something like leading a successful cavalry charge in victorious battle, such as our Barnes history showed of Sheridan. We talked engineer, dreamt it, and played it in my circle of boy friends. My cousin, Henry Schertz, was especially ambitious in this direction. It was his obsession. I presume his mania for engines was the result of a present of a toy railroad train his father once gave him during a prolonged period of recovery from a broken leg. At any rate, he thought of nothing else. "The first one to the bridge will be an engineer," he used to say in starting a foot race, always seeing to it, however, that he got a good start in the race before he made the announcement. Or, "The last one out of the barn won't be an engineer," as he rushed out of the building followed, of course, by all the others. Henry never realized his boyish ambitions, however, nor did any of the rest of us. One of our group became a speculator in oil and finally broke up, another a dentist; Henry remained in the cornfield; I became a teacher; Ben came nearest, perhaps, reaching the goal—he drives a truck.

There were several small boys' jobs during thrashing time. Sam stood in the grain wagon and scooped back the oats that the measuring man lifted in half bushels into the back end of the wagon. My task was that of water boy to the men in the fields, a task much to my liking, especially when I had one of the neighboring boys as a companion. To hitch up Flora to an old buggy and with a jug of water and a boy friend on the seat by your side; to drive back and forth from the machine to the field; to see everything, and be everywhere; to stop at the engine; to watch the hustle about the separator at a safe distance from the dust and dirt; to visit the men in the barn scooping off the oats from the loaded wagons; to go to the kitchen whenever hungry and have cousin Susie, who had come to help Mother for the day, give you a fresh doughnut, perhaps; to go everywhere without the necessity of walking more than a step or two—this was play, not work.

The forenoon had gone before we knew it. A long shrill blast of the whistle announced to all the men that the time for dinner had arrived. The noon hour was a welcome interruption in the thrasherman's day. The men were all tired and hungry. To "eat like a thrasherman" was the last word in describing a man's appetite. The women in our run, all good cooks, vied with each other in putting up sumptuous dinners. All except the Yankees. It was quite generally agreed that these could not compete with the Germans and Swiss in the fine art of cooking.

After a thorough rinsing of their faces with dashes of cold water from the basins of an improvised washstand in the front yard, the men gathered about the dining room door, eagerly awaiting the call to dinner, as though fearful that there might not be enough room for all at the long dining table especially set up for the occasion. When Mother finally appeared at the door to announce that dinner was ready, there was a mad rush for the table that barely gave her time to get safely out of the way. Each hungry thrasherman hurled himself into the chair nearest him. No time was lost in unnecessary preliminaries. Each one began at once to help himself to whatever food was most readily accessible. All down the long table which extended the entire length of the dining room were big plates filled with stacks of home-made bread, platters heaped high with mashed potatoes, bowls of brown gravy, and capacious dishes loaded down with huge chunks of roast beef, besides pies, cakes, jellies, and other delicacies too numerous to mention. "Beef," which might be either roast or steak, though usually the former, was considered a great delicacy and was used only at weddings, at thrashing time, or on Sundays when we had company. At all other times the farmer ate pork of his own slaughtering.

Table manners were not much in evidence. Hiding back of their numbers and the exclusive masculinity of the occasion, the men thought only of accomplishing the task at hand without observing any of the rules that were supposed to govern social intercourse on more formal occasions, especially in the presence of women. "Pass the cow," requested one of the stackers of Sam Bally who sat several chairs below him, having the cream pitcher in mind, and winking at the hired girl, who was busy filling the water glasses of the thirsty drinkers. Eating implements were meant for use rather than ornament. Bob Molitor, one of the separator men, was making rapid inroads into the pile of food he had heaped upon his plate as he alternately fed his capacious mouth with a big hunk of beef on a fork in his left hand and with a knife piled high with mashed potatoes in his right. "Feeding from both sides," he called it, borrowing a phrase from the thrashing practice of feeding bundles from both sides of the machine at the same time. With two gulps, John Bumeter, who sat at the end of the table, emptied his cup of coffee, and smacking his lips, handed his cup to Susie for more.

The food kept passing in a circle about the table during the entire meal, and each helped himself to what he wanted. His ability to help himself was limited only by the reach of his arm. But John, who was an old country Dutchman and had not been in America long enough to learn all the niceties of American table manners in thrashing time, found that he could reach farther by standing up than when seated. At any rate, just as he got up to reach for another big piece of beef about the time most of the others had finished their cake, Bob, passing by his chair found the temptation to teach John some American table manners too great to neglect. He quietly pulled out the chair from under the big Dutchman, who came to the floor with a crash, in the meantime in broken English and half German making the air blue with uncomplimentary adjectives no longer remembered. If Bob had not been a thrasherman and John a half acclimated Dutchman, this might not have been the end of the episode; but as it was, John had to be satisfied with the status quo. For the rest of the season, however, the Dutchman's exclamation of mingled surprise and disgust was a byword among us boys for every unusual circumstance.

Although the amount of food consumed was enormous, the meal time was short. In twenty minutes all were through. My brother Johnie and I stood in a corner during all this time, fearful that the mashed potatoes with gravy and beef would surely give out as Susie continually retreated to the kitchen for fresh supplies. But the stock seemingly was inexhaustible. Mother had experience with thrashers before and knew how to gauge their capacity for food. We ate at the second table and there was still plenty left for late comers.

The afternoon was hot and sultry, but the steady grind continued through the heat and dust without a stop until late in the evening. The thrashers, nearing the end of the run and anxious to complete the season, were beginning to work early and late. The last hour of the day was always the most pleasant of all to me. The last trip into the field had been made with the water jug, and Flora had been safely stabled for the night. The pitchers were coming in from the field. From a secure seat on the water wagon, freed from all responsibilities for the day, I surveyed the whole scene. For some time the sun, hiding behind the towering stack, had been casting a lengthening shadow across the cow lot and now was sinking, a big red ball, below the hazy horizon. The wind having died down, everything was quiet and the air was growing damp. The men about the machine were moving around more deliberately than earlier in the afternoon. Two of the men on the stack had already slid down the loose straw, leaving the only one, covered with sweat and dust, to follow the automatic stacker as it moved back and forth and put the finishing touch to the high top of the well-rounded heap of yellow straw.

The feeder delivered the bundles into the cylinder with less certainty than in the early afternoon and occasionally let one slip through with a thud that nearly stalled the engine, calling forth a series of loud puffs as though in violent protest against the extra labor caused by the feeders' carelessness. All the sounds about the machine were more subdued and muffled than usual. Above the irregular hum of the cylinder could be heard the rattle of the shaker arms and the occasional angry puff of the engine. The heavy black coal smoke rose in a straight column like a big rope high into the heavens, where, unraveling itself, it floated like a cloud with the prevailing current of air to the east. With every unusually heavy effort of the engine a perfect ring of black was cut through the spark arrester and coughed into the air, where like a wagon wheel lying horizontally, it floated off in the direction of the cloud of smoke. Finally, as the shadows began to thicken, and the evening star began to show its first glimmering light in the west, the last forkful of loose straw was pitched onto the platform from the ground. Father threw the fork over his shoulder; Sam Bally waved his arms; the engineer pushed in his throttle; one of the men shoved off the big belt with his fork handle; and soon everyone had left the late scene of feverish activity for the belated supper table.

The supper hour was much less boisterous than had been the noonday meal. The men were all dead tired. They hurriedly finished their supper in silence, quietly left the table one after another to hitch up their teams and start for home, where many of them would still find evening chores awaiting them. Joe and Steve, the hired man, went out to feed and bed down our own horses; Sam started for the milking pen; the women cleared the table and got ready for the morrow's cooking and baking; I followed my father and the separator men out under the maples in the front yard.

Sam Bally was unusually talkative that night. This had been his record day, having thrashed two thousand bushels of grain, his record for the season. Naturally, he was in good spirits. My father, too, was well pleased with the heavy yield of his oats. The talk naturally turned to the subject of thrashing and thrashers' experiences, finally drifting to thrashing tragedies. My father told how, when as a young man he had been running a Buffalo Pitts machine with a horsepower, one of the men got caught by his coat in the tumbling rod just where it was connected to the cylinder. The coat wrapped about his body so quickly that it crushed out the man's life before the machine could be stopped.

Sam in turn told what happened to one of his men just the year before, while thrashing in the eastern end of the county.

His separator man, a heavy man weighing something above two hundred pounds, one afternoon while standing on the worn cover just above the cylinder, broke through the thin slab of wood and fell straight into the revolving cylinder going full speed. Both legs were drawn in through the concaves up to his thighs; and although no vital parts of the body were reached, he died from the shock before he could be extricated.

These gruesome stories of the life tragedies of men who had lived in our own neighborhood, told in that subdued undertone which storytellers always assume in discussing serious things in the dark, became vividly fixed in my memory; but the details of other tragedies became a confused blue in my drowsy mind; for, tired and heavy with sleep, with the chirping of the crickets from the new straw stack in the cow lot and the faint echo of the last hay rack as it rattled down the west road faintly resounding in my ears, I dozed away and was soon asleep under the maples, but awoke the next morning to find myself safely in bed.

All the next day and the following the thrashing continued; but the crew never equaled the first day's run. On the forenoon of the last day there was a pause of a brief hour for repairs. A careless hauler had let his fork drop into the cylinder, causing a number of concave spikes to be knocked out. By four o'clock in the afternoon, however, the thrashers and all the hands pulled out of our yard, to the great relief of our women, but to the equally sharp regret, no doubt, of the neighbor women to whom the machine had gone and who were to furnish the whole company with an evening meal.

The day after thrashing seemed almost like Sunday. Where there had been dust, noise, and feverish activity for three days, everything was quiet, almost lonesomely so. The men were all gone; even my brother Sam was continuing his task of scooping back oats in the grain wagon at the neighbors. Mother, too, was alone with my small sisters, Lizzie the hired girl having followed the machine up the road. Instead of mashed potatoes, pie, and cake, the noonday meal that day consisted of bread and cold meat. The barn doors were all closed. Out in the cow lot, the scene of so much life the day before, there was a Sunday quietness and nothing to remind us of this activity except two big cinder piles left by the departed engine and, of course, the two big, shining yellow stacks which made everything look different. Johnie and I felt lonesome. But we could crawl up the towering piles of straw and from these lofty heights view the level fields for miles around. How empty and big now the stubble fields looked so lately filled with oat shocks. How suggestive of lonely freedom the magnificent sweep of the solitary turkey buzzard as high in the clouds he circled above the countryside!

A few days later the cows were turned into the straw lot. Soon they brushed the sides of the stacks smooth and hard and trampled underfoot all the loose straw around the edges. In a few months the fall rains had reduced the big piles of yellow into smaller and more compact mounds of brown which, for the rest of the winter, furnished our cattle with most of their feed and all their shelter.

4

The Last Day

In view of the fact that nearly my whole life has been spent in the schoolroom, I should like to say that from my very first day in the district school I was passionately fond of all things intellectual; but a decent regard for the truth constrains me to confess that for some years at least I hated school and everything connected with it. The early impressions I recall most vividly are the peculiar smell of printer's ink on the new textbooks and the colored maps of the large geographies used by the big boys and girls and, of course, the recess period when we all rushed out-of-doors to play blackman or Andy-over. The sweetest sound of the day was the four o'clock bell which released us from a long day of drudgery to our homes where, upon our arrival, we made straight for the pantry to help ourselves to liberal slices of homemade bread, thickly spread with apple butter or gooseberry jam.

Especially tedious was the routine of school work in the golden days of autumn, or the bright, cheerful days of spring. When the sun shone bright and the skies were blue, when the air was full of bird song, when all nature called us out-of-doors—then the schoolroom was a prison house. How glad I was one glorious spring morning when it was announced that we would have no school for a week because of an epidemic of measles in the neighborhood.

Our schoolhouse, a small, white, squatty, one-room affair, not much larger than a box car, was located at the crossroads in the very center of the district of four square miles. The nearest family lived just across the road; and the farthest, two miles away. The school yard was a small lot hardly big enough for a ballground. The building was set well back; along the road in front extended a row of hard maples under whose welcome shade we played mumbletypeg or exchanged boyhood secrets.

Country modesty was not so sensitive as that of the city. The oblong outhouse in one corner of the schoolyard was divided into two parts, one for the boys and the other for the girls, by a thin wooden partition. Through this some of the evil-minded big boys of an older generation had cut holes with their pocket knives. Obscene signs and suggestive drawings cut by these same boys were to be found on the board fence facing the road, for they were meant to be seen and thus placed in conspicuous places, in full view of boys, girls, teachers, and parents, but never removed.

The building faced south. I have since learned that all school houses should face north. In our geographies we learned that the top of the map was north, and the right east; then Germany is to the right of France, and Holland to the north of Belgium, as it should be. But if the desk faces south, north is south, and east is west in the geography that lies before you. Some years later when visiting France, the Rhine to me was always to the west, and Belgium to the south; it was with the utmost difficulty that I could maintain a proper sense of direction. The school building might just as well have been located on the south side of the road; but the builders evidently were not considering the convenience of European tourists at the time.

Inside, the building was as plain and drab as the outside. Both walls and ceiling were lined with plain, wide boards painted a dull grey except between the windows where a coat of black converted these spaces into blackboards. Three rows of double seats placed lengthwise across the room were graded to suit all sizes of pupils, from the biggest in the rear to the smallest in front. The big round coal stove in the middle gave out too much heat for the small children nearby and too little for the big ones far away. The teacher's desk in front was flanked on both sides by the long recitation benches. An annex across the front end, added to the original building later, served as an anteroom for our wraps, the water bucket, and on rainy days as a play room for blind man's buff, or clap in, clap out. The movable material equipment consisted of an A B C chart, a globe, an abacus, water bucket, and stove poker.

The curriculum still consisted of the three R's with a little geography and history added in the wintertime for the big boys and girls. There was no graded course of study and no thought of finishing anything. The nearest thing to graduation was a classification according to readers. A boy who had finished the fifth reader was in the graduating class, his education being tested by his ability to read. Boys and girls kept coming to school, however, for a month or two each winter until they were twenty-one years old, unless they were married before that time, which was very often the case. If they had finished the fifth reader at fifteen, they read it over again each winter, reviewing also all the other advanced books. We had heard of a sixth reader, but it had never been used in our school. The best educated boy was the one who could remember best the contents of the school texts. So long as you had not yet memorized everything thoroughly it was still worthwhile to go to school.

These postgraduate boys usually learned very little and were not an ornament to the school. I remember a few of them—my older cousin Chris Lehman, who one day nearly scared me out of my wits when he showed me a beautiful little red book from which he made an ugly little snake pop out like a jumping jack by releasing a concealed spring; and Pete Kyle, who one time spit a big wad of tobacco juice out of the window which hit me straight in the eye as I was passing by.

The teacher was busy all day long, hearing from thirty to thirty-five recitations, devoting from five to ten minutes to each. The recitation was a formal affair, giving no time for discussion. It consisted in the main in answering as correctly as possible some ten or fifteen questions at the end of the geography or history lesson, solving so many problems in arithmetic, giving the right definition for a noun or adverb, and reading aloud with proper emphasis the assigned reading lesson. The closing exercise of the evening was a ten-minute spelling lesson. An equal period was devoted after dinner to the art of penmanship. Both morning and afternoon sessions were opened with a song from the *Gospel Hymns,* a well-known hymnal at that time made popular by Moody and Sankey. Favorite songs were "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning." Sometimes the day's work was begun by a repetition of the Lord's Prayer, but that depended on the piety of the teacher.

My favorite studies, if I had any, were geography and history. Among my favorite pieces in the fourth reader were two of Trowbridge's poems depicting farm life—"Farmer John," who, having just returned to his country home from a visit to the city, expressed his joy on returning by "patting old Bay" and "slapping old Gray"; and "Evening on the Farm," representing the farm boy going over the hills after the cows, "his shadow lengthening along the land" and calling "Co Boss, Co Boss." I never liked "Co Boss," however. I preferred our own call better, "Sook Boss," with the S-o-o-k long drawn out. Darius Green wasn't in our book, the Raub series of readers. I also liked "An Order for a Picture," and "Woodman, Spare That Tree." Later on in the fifth reader an appealing story was that of the dying soldier in Algiers from Bingen, "Fair Bingen on the Rhine." Some years later in the course of a voyage down the Rhine I understood why the exiled soldier in his ebbing hours longed for his fair Bingen. But I never cared for "Bozarris," nor "Make Way for Liberty." The teacher always had us emphasize these dramatic passages in loud voices, and the whole school would stop to listen. "Co Boss" had to be said in a loud voice, too, but that came more naturally; we had often practiced it out in the pasture and cow lot.

Most of the children in our district were of Swiss and German stock, though American born, and for the most part of American-born parentage. One family was Irish. The rest we classed as Yankees, though none came from New England. No matter, however, from what part of the world their parents or grandparents came, the children were all typical Americans, not conscious of any divided loyalty. All spoke the English language equally well; all studied a common history and the same literature; and all shared common ideals of political democracy and civil liberty. The public school, after all, is still the greatest leveling force in American life, and the strongest bulwark of our democratic society. Blood is no barrier to the spread of common ideas. The perpetuation of our political ideals and the safety of our national life rest primarily on the preservative influence of our public school system.

This does not mean, of course, that there was no sense of group consciousness among the Dutch and Yankees as they called one another, for there was. They differed in customs and practices as well as in social ideals. The "Yankees" were more shiftless than the Dutch. They possessed less land and had smaller families, butchered fewer hogs, and did not care for sauerkraut, though they seemed to have a fondness for "Schmierkäs." The Dutch had a passion for cleanliness, fine horses, and large barns; they were noted for their industry and finally bought out their less thrifty "Yankee" neighbors, who followed the setting sun to cheaper lands and, no doubt, to supposedly more congenial companionships. These latter, because they could speak only one language, thought themselves purer Americans; while the former, owners of larger farms and finer stock, thought these older Americans, many of whom sent their boys to college, rather shiftless and lazy.

Both lived on terms of friendly co-operation, however, and these submerged differences rarely cropped out above the surface level except on rare occasions, such as when the German-speaking school directors took advantage of the time they happened to have a teacher who spoke German as well as English and arranged for a half hour of German instruction at the close of the regular school day for such as cared to stay. The only vocal disapproval on the part of the "Yankee" children that I remember, however, was their gleeful accusation that the teacher one night was telling the children about a "louse," almost a prohibited byword among the German school children. The accusers evidently had been eavesdropping back of the entry door and had mistaken the teacher's explanation of the German umlaut for the forbidden word.

The most enjoyable part of the school day, it is needless to say, was the period devoted to outdoor games during the noon hour and recess—all too brief. Our games were the usual ones familiar to school boys of the middle west a generation ago—blackman, prisoner's base, and three-cornered cat, among others.

Several, I believe, were local adaptations of more general games. Andy-over was played by two opposing teams on opposite sides of the schoolhouse; fir, fire, fits, was a form of tag starting from a cinder pile near one corner of the building.

The big game, of course, was the ball game. We had a brand all our own. Dutchball we called it, and it differed from ordinary baseball, which we termed townball, in several important respects. Any number could play. Instead of a pitcher whose chief art was to throw a curve that could not be hit, we had a "dropper" who stood in line with the batter and tossed the ball so that it might be hit to the best advantage. There was no limit to the number of times a batter might strike at the ball; so there was no such thing as striking out, and no inducement to drop a poor ball. If the ball was caught by a fielder of the opposing side, the side at bat was out. If the ball was not caught, the batter would run for the field base. If he was hit by the ball before he reached base the side was out also; but if not, he was safe until such time as he cared to risk a run back to home base. There was no need for fine decisions, and so there was no umpire. The successful runs were chalked up on the board fence back of the home base. The bat was a substantial hickory stick, and the ball was made of highly elastic rubber. When a husky batter with a strong arm got a good chance at it the ball sailed high into the air and far out into the field. The fielders wore no gloves, and it took a courageous heart as well as a big calloused hand to capture one of these swift balls on the fly. The boy who could unflinchingly perform this feat was the hero of the school and always the first to be taken in choosing up sides. It was for the benefit of the more timid, no doubt, that the rules permitted catching the ball on the first bounce, but not the second. In order to discourage the strong boy from making too much of a display of his prowess, and out of respect for the neighbor's bull grazing in the meadow just across the school yard fence, "over the fence" was out, too.

Choosing up sides was an important part of the game. In order to distribute the good players equally, two boys were agreed on as leaders to choose up alternately from the players standing by. The leaders had no other function. We did not know the word *captain*. Pride rose and fell among the expectant players as they were early or late in being chosen. The last one to be taken was in disgrace. When there was an outstanding player such as several of the Lehman boys, who always caught on the fly, never on the bounce, it was an advantage to get first choice. There were several ways of deciding which leader should have this advantage. A favorite method among us was for one of the boys to toss a bat to the other boy who caught it in one hand, holding it in an upright position. Each boy then alternately put his hand around the bat above the other until each had measured his way to the top by handbreadths. The boy who got the last hold at the top had his first choice of players. Some boys acquired marvelous skill and judgment in catching the bat just at the place that would give them the last handhold.

Other methods of counting out were usually resorted to when someone was to be chosen as "it" in some game or other. One among several such rhymes I remember, though I never saw it in print and so do not know how it compares with the standard version. It runs something like this:

Onery, orery, ickory, Ann
Filison, Follison, Nicholas, John
Quevy, Quavey, English navy
Be, Bo, Barney, Buck

Buck was the one counted out.

We seldom shared our games with the girls except on special occasions, or when an exceptional girl like Emma Lehman made a valuable member of the team. She had a brave heart and big hands and could catch a fly as well as her older brothers. But the other girls were hardly ever invited to join us. We wanted them to stay in their own corner of the playground. There was one game, however, to which they were sometimes welcome, especially if they would play the part assigned them—the end of the long line in "Crack the Whip."

We played ball all through the winter except when there was snow on the ground. Then we turned to snow games like fox and geese; or when the snow lasted long enough we built a strong snow fort, then divided up into sides for a real battle. Sometimes the sides were British and Americans, but more often

Indians and Old Settlers, because when you had Indians on one side you could add scalping as a detail. The Old Settlers were usually given the inside of the fort, while the Indians were the besiegers.

The rules of war were few, but, like international law in general, broke down just when most needed. When a boy was hit he was supposed to be dead and get out of the game; but if the ball that hit him was an unusually vicious one and hit him somewhere in the region of his nose, and especially if the thrower was a boy he didn't like, he forgot to stay dead and became more alive than those who had not yet been killed. Snatching off a rival's cap served for scalping when the contestants came into close quarters. When the time for preparation permitted, balls were often pressed hard until they became solid masses of ice and capable of doing real damage. Occasionally what started as a friendly sport developed into a real fight. To be struck by even a friendly snowball was not always an experience of unmixed pleasure; and if enough of the balls went straight there might be a real scrap. The premonition that these friendly contests might develop into real fights added just the zest and excitement needed to make them of real interest. We always went into them with a good deal of the anxiety of men going into actual battle. The fear of being struck by a ball of ice was not imaginary, but a real fear. Occasionally when our side was getting the worst of it in the heat of battle, we felt a distinct sense of relief when the school bell rang and saved the day for us, though, of course, none of us would admit it.

The great social and intellectual school affair of the winter was the old-fashioned spelling school. The teacher always selected an appropriate time for this event when sleighing was good and the weather promised to be fair. Invitations were sent out far and wide to other schools. We spent days in fond anticipation of the coming occasion. On the eventful night, long before the time of beginning, we had gathered in the schoolyard to watch the visitors drive in. As the hour approached we could hear the laughter and songs of groups of happy young people piled thick in bob sleds coming up both the east and west roads. Snatches of familiar country melodies came to us above the merry jingling of sleigh bells across the still, clear, crisp evening air—"My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean," "Way Down upon the Swanee River," or "My Darling Nellie Grey."

The little schoolhouse was packed to the doors. Seats meant for two had to do service for three. Prospective spellers and visitors occupied every available nook and corner in the main room; they filled the entry hall; they lined up along the walls, and some had to remain outside. Two leaders were appointed by the teacher to choose up sides. Spellers, like ball players, were selected for their efficiency. The good spellers were known far and wide and were chosen alternately according to their reputations. When the two long lines along the side walls had been completed the contest began. The teacher pronounced the words from the spelling book, beginning with the easy ones; words misspelled passed back and forth between the two sides until spelled correctly, those missing taking their seats. As the poorer spellers went down, the words became more difficult; and by the time the ranks had been thinned out to a half dozen or so of the toughest contestants the heaviest artillery was brought up, such words as I remember them now as tic douloureux, phthisic, daguerreotype, feoffment, chevaux-de-frise, and other similar foreign and unusual words with which the spelling books of the day were cluttered, but which were never understood nor used by the spellers in actual life.

The old spelling school filled an important niche in the social life of the young people of the neighborhood, and especially in our barren school life. It was always a gala occasion. It glorified the old schoolhouse and made it for the time being a place of importance in our lives. How different the little room looked in the evening with its kerosene lights and the dark shadows on the walls. The seats usually suggesting weary school boys and girls driven to unpleasant school tasks were now filled by grown boys and girls from other neighborhoods, strange teachers, and perhaps a director or two to see that the boys behaved themselves properly. The whole building was transformed, and we forgot for the time all about hard arithmetic problems and grammar lessons. We remembered this night for many days and began to look forward to the next spelling school the teacher had promised us.

The red-letter day of the whole school year, however, was the

Last Day, which closed the year's work. This day usually came along about the latter part of May or the first week in June—that rarest of all the seasons, when nature is at her very best, and life is richest. No doubt some of these days were rainy and dreary, but I remember only those full of sunshine; and the one I remember best of all was the last day in a very real sense. I was now twelve years old, and at that age a boy on the farm was supposed to attend school only during the winter months, doing a full hand's work on the farm during the working season. This was to be my last Last Day. In the coming fall I would start in after corn husking, and the following spring quit the first of March. I had good reason, therefore, for remembering this day. I cannot say, however, that it was with a feeling of deep regret that I contemplated the prospects of the year to come. The schoolroom was still a prison house to me at the age of twelve, especially in the balmy days of spring and the warm golden days of Indian Summer. I did not regret the lengthening of my school vacation across these two periods.

This particular Last Day was all that could be asked for. The sun shone bright and warm, but not hot, in a sky that was as blue as purest azure. The song sparrow was singing to his heart's content from his hiding place in the high hedge fence across the road, while the yellowhammer was galloping through the air back and forth from Uncle Pete's orchard to the big cottonwood just beyond the corner of the school lot. Long before beginning time we had gathered and were lying in the shade of the maples, anticipating the events of the day and wondering how many of the big girls of the district would come. We did not care for the big boys, for they would spoil our games, but we knew that the girls would not interfere with our plans.

Everything was in a holiday mood. We had on our clean, Sunday clothes. None of us was barefooted. Although the regular class routine was observed, the teacher did not seem to care whether we had our lessons or not. Our short recitation periods were shortened even more; for the afternoon was to be given over to "exercises." And since she did not wish to shirk any of her regular duties of the day she heard all the recitations, but gave each only half the usual time, in some cases just time to be called and dismissed. Best of all there were no assignments for the following day. Our teacher's name was Amanda Martin, from our home village. This was to be Amanda's last day, too. She had taught our school for a number of years; but now she was to be married during the summer to a wealthy farmer who lived near Cazenovia on a large cattle farm.

Just before recess the big girls—the Minger and Wüthrich girls—came with well-filled baskets, for at noon we were going to have a picnic. Each one was to put what he had in his dinner pail on a common table, out under the maples. The recess and noon intermissions were much longer than usual, which gave us added time for play. Even our games assumed a holiday character; for we played our unusual games. For Dutchball we substituted townball; all the rules against the admission of the girls were lifted; one of the games we never played except with the girls was something called "needle's eye." A boy and girl stood together facing each other with arms extended high above their heads forming an arch, singing a rhyme about a needle's eye, and at a proper place in the song the arms descended around the one who happened to be in the proper position just at that time. Two choices were whispered into the ear of the captive, who took his place according to his choice in one of the two lines, placing his arms about the waist of the one in front, be it boy or girl, preparatory to a tug of war at the end. The snatch of rhyme as I remember it said something about a needle's eye, high in the sky; but a recent game book gives this version:

The Needle's Eye that doth supply
  The Thread that runs so true;
There's many a lass that I've let pass
  Because I wanted you.

If this was the rhyme that we repeated, which I doubt, then the fact that the lass may at times have been a lad was a matter of slight consequence.

Our dinner was spread out on a long row of white table cloths laid on the grass under the maples. How tempting the food looked to a hungry boy! How different from the usual cold lunch of eggs and bread with apple butter! What my own lunch bucket furnished this day I do not remember, but, no doubt, my mother did not forget that this was a special occasion. I still have a distinct vision of the tempting food scattered about on the white table covering—chicken, beef, ham, red eggs, potato salad, pumpkin, cherry, and custard pies, cheese, pickles, oranges, apples, cakes of different colors, peach preserves, strawberry jam, and about everything else we ever had on company occasions. I can still see it all. Olives and bananas were still unknown in our community. We even had hot coffee warmed on the stove in the schoolhouse. We called it a school picnic; and it is one of the events of this Last Day that stands out in my memory most distinctly.

The afternoon session began late. Even the opening songs were in keeping with the holiday spirit. The Minger girls brought with them several copies of *Gospel Hymns Number 5* and *6,* which contained new songs not in our regular school hymnals *Number 1, 2,* and *3.* Instead of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," and "Hold the Fort for I am Coming," which had become somewhat stale with age, we sang the new songs, "Beulah Land" and "On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand." These new songs in the *Gospel Hymns Number 5* and *6* seemed very beautiful and sweet to me then as a boy in the little white schoolhouse some forty years ago; and for many years, the memory of the singing, sweeter still. But now year by year the impressions are becoming fainter and are gradually fading into the limbo of once cherished but now forgotten possessions. It is with increasing difficulty that I am able to recover even a slight measure of the thrill I once enjoyed in recalling them. I now have merely a sweet memory.

The remainder of the afternoon was devoted to "exercises," but I recall very few of the numbers except my own contribution which was a debate with my cousin Joe Lehman on the momentous question, "Resolved that the shotgun is more useful on the farm than the cow." I was on the affirmative, but I recall only my closing argument, namely, that with a shotgun you could kill a cow, but the cow could do nothing to a shotgun, sufficient evidence of the superior value of the latter.

The sun was still high in the western sky when the Last Day closed long before the usual hour. The Lehman boys strolled along the road with us as far as our home, from whence they cut across the fields to their own.

"What are you going to do tomorrow?" I asked of Joe as he started through the cow lot. "I don't know," he replied with regret, "I would like to fly my new kite that I got from Montgomery Ward, but Pa wants me to cut thistles in the pasture."

5

A Long Hot Summer

I BEGAN MY apprenticeship as a full farm hand in corn-plowing time soon after the Last Day. June and July of 1887 were remembered for a long time by the farmers of that period as months of exceptional heat. Day after day the thermometer stood between 95 and 100 degrees, which was especially hard on the work horses of the community. From all about us we heard of victims collapsing from the unusual conditions. One of our own horses was included in the list.

We were plowing in a large field with corn rows one-half mile long. Eager to do my full share of work, I drove my team just a little faster and rested just a little less, with the result that at the end of the afternoon I had made just one long round more than the rest of the men in the field. But it was just one round too many for my team which included a young colt hardly more than three years old. The inexperienced young colt had used up his last ounce of energy. Just before sundown, as I reached the end of the last row for the day, preparing to unhitch, Jack fell over, never to get up again. He died that night, a victim of a hot July sun and of the ignorant zeal of an ambitious boy eager to outdo his elders in his first week as a full farm hand.

I did not sleep well that night. All through the troubled, hot night I dreamed of weary sun-struck horses and anxious men. Once I awoke just in time to keep Jack from rolling off the barn roof to which I had taken him through some magic power for the purpose, doubtless, of reviving his departed spirit. The next day we dragged poor Jack out to a remote corner of the pasture lot where under a funeral pyre of old rails and fence posts we tried to cremate his mortal remains. For days afterward the sight of several turkey buzzards floating in circles high in the air above this spot, and seen from every corner of the farm, kept alive the memory of this my first farm tragedy.

The poor horses suffered not only from the heat, but from other attendant ills as well. Ill-fitting collars carelessly adjusted over tangled manes kept damp by the salty sweat that streamed down the aching shoulders often wore big ugly sore spots on both neck and shoulders that must have been exceedingly painful and sensitive to the uncomplaining horses.

Man, as well as beast, suffered from the heat. Corn-plowing time is the most monotonous, least romantic, and most disagreeable season of the entire farm year. Even manure hauling, filthy though it may be, is to be preferred. Walking up and down the dusty corn rows on the soft, loose dirt under a hot July sky with the sweat rolling down your dust-begrimed face in little rivulets, your whole body revolting against the dust and dirt that finds its way through your clothes everywhere, monotonously following the cultivator down one row and back the next to the perpetual sound of the creak-creak of the harness as the tired horses plod along, was to me the height of drudgery, the last word in disagreeable labor.

Its single compensation was that it was followed by that most pleasant and romantic season of the year for both horse and boy, though perhaps not for man, hay-making time. Hay making was always a delight to the growing boy. There was something about the sweet smell of the new-mown hay, the clean-looking stubble of the meadow after the hay was removed, the song of the meadow lark, and the presence of neighbor help that gave the season the spirit of playtime rather than of tedious work and threw a spell about it that glorified it above all other farm work.

Nature at this time of the year is still at its best. The fall drought has not yet begun; the earth is still covered with a rich, living coat of deep green; spacious fields of heavily headed oats just turning golden sway back and forth in the gentle western breeze, like the waves of the sea; long vistas of corn rows, dark and rich, just coming into tassel, stretch across the fields; the meadow lark, the killdeer, and the song sparrow fill the air with their welcome music. The skies are usually clear and blue; it is the only farm season that has ever broken into poetry: Maud Muller was raking hay, not plowing corn.

My work was not strenuous. I was not yet strong enough to make a full hand back of the hay loader nor in the haymow; and so I was put to raking the hay into windrows and driving the team to the loader. For my father, however, the season was one of anxiety. With the exception of harvesting, haying season was the only time he helped directly with farm work. These were the two most critical periods of the farm year, when speed was necessary to save the crop. A rainy week in haying time might be as ruinous as in harvesting time. During no other time of the year did he watch the evening sky so anxiously. We always breathed a sigh of relief when the last load had been safely stowed away in the lofty haymow.

The harvest, too, was light this summer, due to the heat and dry weather. The threshing season was short. I served again as water boy, but after our fields were cleared I was set to fall plowing, a new task for me.

Fall plowing is a long and lonely job. To sit on a sulky plow, driving a three-horse team around an eighty-acre field where the first round is a mile and a half long, turning under stubble sixteen inches at a time, may not be strenuous for the driver, but the end seems a long way off. The driver's chief worry here is to see that his team keeps going, and that it does not crowd the plowshare too near the furrow; for if he cuts less than sixteen inches he prolongs his task by just that much. Old Flora who was hitched to the tongue as the middle horse soon learned that by crowding to the right she could lighten her load, but was not intelligent enough to know that what she gained in light load she would have to make up in time consumed.

Old Flora, by the way, was a smart old mare. She could open any gate we had on the farm and somehow jump over any fence we could build. For that reason we seldom let her out of the barn. But one Sunday when we were all to be gone for the day, we turned her out with the rest, hoping that for this once at least, she might be good. On our return, however, we found that she had opened the barnyard gate, entered the stable, and by pulling a stop from a grain spout which led from the granary above, had discharged several hundred bushels of oats on the barn floor, in the meantime helping herself liberally to all she could eat. All of her tricks were of the kind that led to trouble. She never did anything useful like one of Uncle John's horses, so Pete said, who learned to work the pump handle, and occasionally pumped water for the cows. And so I was quite sure that the tricky old mare knew why she pushed so hard to the right when hitched to the plow.

Most aggravating to the horses, and trying to the patience of the driver, were the swarms of flies that insisted on settling in the inaccessible spots on the sides and backs of the horses, where neither head nor tail nor heels could reach the pests. The poor horses were not only obliged to pull a heavy load all day long, but had to fight flies every inch of the way as well. Especially annoying was the big green bottle fly who, after he had once found a choice location on breast or flank, could not be dislodged short of death by man or beast.

Occasionally, too, a nest of bumble bees was turned up by the plowshare, and in that case usually something happened. First your horses, including the well-behaved old family mare, would begin to switch their tails and throw back their heads more vigorously than usual. You might even feel a sharp sting yourself on your chin or on the tip of your nose. Then your team would leave the beaten furrow, which it had been patiently following all day long, and start across the field, plunging and kicking as they ran. The race ended when one or more of the horses found themselves so hopelessly entangled in the harness and the running gear that further progress was impossible. You were lucky if nothing more serious happened. I never quite outgrew the fear of these bumble bee attacks in the stubble field. A small boy would find himself quite helpless in trying to manage his panic-stricken team under these conditions.

With the exception of these occasional diversions caused by flies and bees, the day was inclined to be long and monotonous, though not altogether unpleasant. Sometimes I took a rifle with me to the field, hoping for a shot at an occasional prairie chicken, or perhaps a chicken hawk which often perched on a tall cottonwood along the south fence. But ordinarily there was nothing to do but give the horses their own way and leisurely follow the plow round after round and, when my mind wasn't a thousand miles away chasing a will-o'-the-wisp or building some air castle, to watch the heavy autumn clouds gather and spread themselves against a deep blue sky or, perhaps, to admire the grace of the buzzard's flight, as far in the distant blue and safe from the farm boy's little rifle he floated in wide circles above a choice bit of half-consumed animal remains which he saw or scented even from that dizzy height.

The most charming part of the day was always the late afternoon along toward evening, after the sun had sunk behind the tall hedgerow forming the west line fence, and when the shadows began to lengthen across the fields. On such evenings, as I remember them now, the air was calm, but rapidly beginning to grow thick and damp. From every farm house within the radius of a mile or less there floated across the fields the subdued and familiar barnyard sounds of bawling calves and squealing pigs, as well as the joyful voices of strong-lunged youngsters just returned from school. The weary horses, tired from fighting flies all day long were doggedly, but steadily, pulling in their collars without being urged, the more willing, seemingly, because they felt it in their bones that the hard day's work was drawing to a close, and soon they would be turned into comfortable stables filled with thick beds of clean yellow straw, their mangers filled with fragrant hay and delicious oats. In the pastures the thirsty cows had turned their heads in the direction of the barn lot and were slowly making their way toward the milking pen. High in the sky overhead in every direction could be seen and heard thousands of crows, occasionally in immense black flocks, more frequently single, sometimes caw-cawing, oftener silently flapping along, all headed toward a large grove of cottonwoods on a farm about two miles to the south of us where during the entire autumn they were wont to roost for the night.

Just about as the sun sank beneath the western horizon I unhitched my three horses, turned two of them loose, jumped on the sweaty back of old Flora and, singing "Nellie Grey" or "Old Black Joe," jogged along home with her, tired but happy that we were another day nearer the end.

Many an evening was similar to this, and every day was alike. Although the day's progress seemed slow, each night the strip of black seemed a little wider, and the strip of yellow a little smaller. For forty long days I followed the furrows back and forth across the field, beginning early in August and ending in middle September. During that time I had turned under one hundred acres of stubble all by myself, not at all a bad showing for a boy who was trying to make a full hand for the first time.

That fall there was one bright spot in the dull routine of farm work—a weekly singing school. This enterprise was fostered largely by my father and my uncle, Chris Camp, both of whom were lovers of good music and especially interested in improving the singing in our church and Sunday school. The singers were largely of the Mennonite community. Mennonites everywhere were noted for their good singing, largely, no doubt, because being denied the use of all musical instruments by their church rules in both church and home, the young people took the more eagerly to vocal music.

Each Saturday evening throughout this fall we quit our field work an hour or so earlier than usual and, after an early supper, hied away to the Camp schoolhouse, a mile to the west, to the singing school. The teacher was a certain Missourian by the name of Simon Hartzler, who had spent a summer or two in Chicago learning the art of conducting singing schools under the direction of a certain S. W. Straub, a publisher of music books, whose book, the *Ever New,* we used in our school. Music master Hartzler also had a number of schools in other churches throughout the community, thus making the circuit to our school once each week. He had a beautiful high lyric tenor voice, almost like a woman's. At least so it seemed to me then. If I could only sing like that, I thought, I would ask for little more. For a year or two it was my ambition to be a singing teacher.

These evenings devoted to the art of reading music notes and singing simple songs were bright spots in our prosaic young lives and were looked forward to with fond anticipation throughout the week. Great was our disappointment if for some reason or another the Saturday night appointment miscarried. Here we met our friends, exchanged the week's gossip and, incidentally, learned a little music. Most of the songs were simple and sentimental little ditties, but to us, most impressive and beautiful melodies as well as words. Among other favorites was, "Listen to the Mocking Bird," and a simple rhyme about a lover lamenting the death of his sweetheart sleeping somewhere in a "lovely dell." Lovely dells, weeping willows, and silent graves were always sure to strike a responsive chord in our simple country hearts. A special favorite in demand on various social occasions was, "The Warrior's Grave," sung by a male quartet usually made up of my brother Joe and three of the Camp boys. For years afterward at weddings, reunions, and other community occasions, long after the singers' hair had turned thin and their voices cracked, there was a demand for the "Warrior's Grave" by the "Old Quartet." Soon Joe and several of the Camp boys, too, had become singing teachers; then, in course of time, their children inherited their tuning forks and the urge to be singing masters. For more than forty years now, singing schools have been almost an established institution in the old home community about Metamora, conducted by the children and grandchildren of the original music lovers.

One other episode during this particular autumn left a lasting impression with me—a fierce windstorm one afternoon late in August. Windstorms were not infrequent on the prairies of Illinois and usually were of no particular concern to me. But on this occasion my father and mother had both gone away for the day, and Joe and Sam were helping the neighbors thrash, leaving me alone in temporary charge of the farm and my small sisters in the care of cousin Susie who had come for the day. Susie, unfortunately, was deathly afraid of storms and not likely able to still the fears of small children in times of danger.

The sun rose that morning in a clear sky; and, but for a sultry oppressive atmosphere during the entire forenoon, there was every indication that the day would end as it began. I was particularly glad that the day looked so promising, for this was to be the evening of the singing school. A rainy afternoon would lessen the attendance, and a bad night would stop the meeting entirely. Before noon, however, I began to fear a change. By unhitching time there appeared a low black fringe along the northwestern horizon, an ominous sign for the evening. All our summer storms came from that direction. By the time I had gone back to the field after dinner the dark bar had risen perceptibly. I watched it anxiously all afternoon from the open field, as it slowly advanced toward the sun. I was hoping that if a storm must come it might at least come quickly and pass by in time to leave the evening clear for the singing school. By three o'clock the sun had sunk out of sight behind the sinister bank of inky blackness in the northwest. In another half hour there were muffled mutterings of thunder in the distance and sharp darts of lightning flashing back and forth.

The storm, for that there would be a storm was now evident, began to approach rapidly. The belt of black rose sharply, preceded by a hurrying, rolling mass of grey clouds which soon darkened the whole sky. The peals of thunder became louder and the lightning flashes more brilliant. When I thought it no longer safe to remain in the field, I unhitched and hastened to the barn. By the time I reached the stable the first advance elements of the storm were already upon us. A fresh breeze had suddenly arisen. The horses and cattle in the pasture lot, enjoying their pleasant relief from the heat of the day, were racing about in great glee. The chickens were scurrying to cover. The roar of the wind could be heard as it was advancing several miles away. Heavy clouds of dust appeared ahead of the rain, changing the blackness into a thick grey.

By the time I reached the house the storm was fully upon us. The rain came down in sheets, thunder crashed from every direction, and the lightning blazed all over the sky. Susie had gathered her brood almost from the beginning and had taken them into the cellar, which, of course, did not tend to allay their fears. We huddled together in a heap in the northwest corner, in the belief that since the wind came from that direction it would be the safest corner in case the house were swept off its foundation. The rush of the wind through the trees and the roar of the thunder drowned out such few words as we dared utter to each other in our terror. Every now and then a crash indicated that a big branch of the maples or perhaps a whole tree had been blown to the ground. Every moment we expected the house to go. For a full hour the battle in the heavens raged. The roaring and crashing of the wind and thunder, accompanied by blinding sheets of lightning, were as if the whole artillery of the heavens had been let loose about our house and above our heads.

Finally the rain ceased as suddenly as it had begun; the wind began to calm down; and the rumbling of the thunder retreated to the southeast. The storm was over, and we cautiously crawled up into the kitchen to get a glimpse of the outside world, and to see how much damage had been done.

Everywhere there was evidence of the destructive force of the storm. Tall maple branches had been split off and scattered all about the barn lot; one tree near the barn was completely blown down; the tall cottonwood in the cow lot evidently had been struck by lightning, for one side was completely torn bare and one branch rent into splinters; the tall chimney on the summer kitchen had been swept off. But worst of all as we looked to the south over the corn fields we noticed with dismay that all the corn stalks had been laid flat. Unfortunately, the crop was too near maturity for the stalks to rise again, but not mature enough to insure a full yield. The corn crop would be meager this fall and corn husking literally a back-breaking task.

Soon after the storm, Joe and Sam came home from thrashing; and not very long after, Father and Mother. They had already seen the damage done by the storm as they came along the way. We did not go to the singing school that evening. After supper we all gathered about the dining table near the kitchen stove to discuss the possibility of the corn stalks rising again from the ground, and the probable shortage of the crop.

6

Bumble Bees and Medicine Shows

Between such busy seasons as haymaking and harvest, or thrashing and cornshucking, the growing farm boy is likely to find ample time for an occasional holiday. It was during these periods that Sam and I made our annual Saturday-night pilgrimage to our Uncle Peter Summer, who lived some six or seven miles away, near the neighboring village of Washington, and who had a houseful of boys, two of whom were about our own ages. Sometimes we rode over on two reliable work horses, but when we could get Joe's consent, we borrowed his sulky, a two-wheeled vehicle much in vogue among country boys once upon a time. It was built like a race cart, with the driver's seat, large enough for two, almost under the horse's tail; but the wheels were of large size like buggy wheels.

Uncle Peter was a good entertainer, Aunt Bena a good cook, and our cousins, George and John, boon companions. These visits were always looked forward to as bright spots in the routine experiences of farm life—a welcome half-day relief from manure hauling or weed pulling.

It was, perhaps, because they had only one small sister among seven boys and were called on more than usual to help their mother with house work that our Summer cousins seemed a little more genteel than was common among the boys of our circle. They were rather more literarily inclined, too. They were the only boys of my acquaintance who subscribed to the *Youth's Companion*. The first copy of *Swiss Family Robinson* I ever read I borrowed from George.

Most interesting of all, George was the possessor of a new bicycle, the only one I knew of among my boy friends. It was an "Ordinary" type, the forerunner of the "Safety." The rider sat straight on top of the high front wheel, his legs directly under the handle bars, making it almost impossible to disengage himself in case of a forward tumble. It was with some degree of pride, on the occasion of the particular visit I have in mind, that I was able to mount this bicycle for a spin down the road without previous practice; for I had learned to balance myself on my broken two-wheeled tricycle of an earlier day. But pride frequently goes before a fall. I did not know how easy it was to take a forward plunge. It would have been better had I learned the tricks of bicycling gradually. As I struck a rut in the road, my body leaning forward trying to work up speed, the big front wheel suddenly stopped while the little wheel continued in motion, but upward instead of forward, throwing me some feet ahead. It was some minutes before I was able to pick myself up, with senses fully recovered, but pride all gone. It was my last attempt to ride a bicycle until the "Safety" was invented.

It was perhaps because of the wider reading and literary inclinations that our Summer cousins called their younger brother Peter instead of Pete, as we called our other friends with the same name. They spoke of the head of the house as Father instead of Pa. And so it was only natural, of course, that we boys, inasmuch as we had two uncles with the same name, should call our Summer uncle, "Uncle Peter," while our Schertz uncle went by the name of "Uncle Pete." Ben was not so particular about his father as George was.

Uncle Peter's house was a small one-and-a-half-story affair, with two small attic rooms for the boys, having been built when the family consisted of two instead of ten. As far back as I remember, there had been talk of remodeling to take care of the increasing family, but it was never done. It was only after the children had all grown up and moved out and the family had again dwindled to two that he moved to town and built the big house he no longer needed. The old home has since passed into other hands and remains as it was when first built. Into these two little attic rooms, already overcrowded with seven occupants, we were piled at night, three in a bed, but happy in the freedom to exchange with our cousins our boyhood secrets until far into the night.

Our visits usually started on Saturday afternoon and ended Sunday evening. On this particular Sunday our uncle and aunt had gone away for the day, leaving the house and farm to us boys. We spent the whole forenoon roaming over the meadows and pastures, chasing up ground squirrels, exploring every nook and corner of the new barn, and above all, testing out the bicycle. By early afternoon evidently all the sources of entertainment had been exhausted, the unusual sights on the place explored, and all the topics of conversation depleted. Time was beginning to hang heavily on our hands. We were about ready to go home several hours before the usual time. Sam and I had gone upstairs to look up some continued stories in the *Youth's Companion*. George and John somehow had stolen away, leaving us alone, further evidence that they, too, were ready to call it a day. Glancing out of the window just as we were about to leave, I saw a decrepit old tramp dressed in an old torn coat and slouch hat, with a crooked stick over his back, trudging by the house out in the road. Sam, feeling the need of a little excitement, no doubt, but considering himself perfectly safe behind the upstairs window, called to the tattered old man in certain uncomplimentary language. The tramp looked up and took no further notice of us. But when he fumbled about the latch of the front gate and entered the yard we felt a trifle uneasy. But George and John were both downstairs somewhere, and they would undoubtedly take care of the intruder, we thought.

The boys evidently were not about; for to our consternation we heard heavy footsteps scraping across the kitchen floor directly toward the lower stair door. When the door opened and the old man with a red handkerchief tied across his dirty face glared up at us, shaking his stick and muttering something about the nerve of small boys saying ugly things about their elders and threatening to knock our heads off, we were thoroughly alarmed. Sam especially, whose guilt was the greater, was terrified. His eyes almost popped out of his head; his face turned ashen pale. The tramp in turn, noticing the terrified expression on the face of his victim, evidently thought he had gone far enough.

"Don't get scared, Sam," he said, very much to our astonishment and relief, "It's just me."

He took off his old hat and handkerchief. It was George. He had stolen away from us to play this trick.

We often spoke of this incident afterward when we met, and I presume it is still as vivid in the memory of the other participants as in my own.

My most intimate companions among my cousins were Ben and Pete, both of whom lived only a short distance from our house, and with whom I spent many hours of pleasant association on Sundays and other holidays. Neither of the boys was of a literary turn of mind, nor given to reading the *Youth's Companion,* and so our diversions were likely to be reduced to a more elemental plane, and our sports were of a more primitive character. As I recall those days now, it seems to me that we spent much of our time in meadows and fields, along the hedgerows and following the creeks, hunting for game and in quest of such adventure as might turn up.

A favorite sport in due season was fighting bumble bees. After discovering a nest in hay or stubble field, the first thing is to decide on the plan of campaign. We usually followed one or all of three well-known methods, depending altogether on how anxious we were for a real thrill at the time—the use of fire, a jug, or paddles. The easiest way was simply to gather up a pile of hay or straw, throw it on the nest, set it on fire, and then run away. But that method was too onesided to furnish sufficient excitement when several boys were together, each one of whom bragged about how brave he had been in other similar exploits. It was the plan usually followed when a boy was all alone, and there was no need of showing off. In such cases, discretion was always the better part of valor. The second method was also too tame for unusual occasions. A jug with a little water would be placed near the nest, then the bees would be stirred up by clods of earth or sticks, and as they flew past the jug they would be drawn in and drowned. This was a favorite way of the older boys and our fathers who had passed the fighting and boasting stage of life.

The third, however, usually furnished all the thrills any boy could wish for, ending in a real, and not a sham, battle. Each boy would arm himself with a wide paddle made of a light board, or, preferably, a shingle if one was available. Then the whole group would march, with more or less trepidation, of course, straight up to the nest; one of the bravest boys would stir it up with a stick, then each boy would engage in single combat with such bees as came his way. The initial forward march was the only organized part of the campaign. As soon as the enemy appeared in attack, the ranks broke, and each fighter was kept busy looking after his own safety. If only one bee came at a time the alert boy had no difficulty in successfully swatting his way out of the battle zone; but, if several took after him at once, he had a real fight on hand. Ben and I usually escaped with but minor wounds in these affairs; but Pete, big and fat, with more surface exposed to attack, and slow of action, more often than not came out considerably damaged.

A less dangerous sport was catching the prairie ground squirrel, or chipmunk, as he was sometimes called, either with a gun or snare. This little squirrel, usually found in pastures and meadows, when he retained his burrows in newly-plowed sod became a real nuisance to the farmer, for he delighted in making a meal of freshly planted corn. For this reason, no doubt, we had no compunction of conscience whatever, killing a little animal that otherwise seemed harmless enough. Our earliest method of capture, before we were allowed to carry a rifle, was to fill his burrow in the ground with water until he was washed out and nearly drowned. Several buckets usually sufficed, but in rare cases, where he evidently had burrowed deep underground and had dug several outlets to the world above, he was hard to get.

Often we snared the little pest with a long string. Acquaintance with a bit of squirrel psychology helped us greatly in catching our prey. When driven back into his nest in the ground, his inquisitiveness soon got the better of him, and he was sure to reappear in a short time, cautiously sticking his head aboveground to see what was going on. This brief period was just long enough to drive a stake near the hole and arrange a loop about it. At the proper time, when the little head appeared, a quick jerk would bind the prey to the stake. If you failed at the first attempt, the cunning little animal would not allow his curiosity to get him into trouble the second time. Later on, when I hunted him with a rifle, I made use of the same brief period preparing for a sure shot. After chasing a squirrel into hiding, I hastened forward to within twenty or thirty feet of the opening into his nest; then resting on one knee, I steadied my rifle on the other, taking direct aim at the hole in the ground from which his head was sure to emerge presently. At the first appearance of his head, and before he realized any danger in the new and strange apparition before him, I pulled the trigger. The game was almost too sure and onesided to be any real fun.

Hunting squirrels was often a mere excuse to enjoy the great out-of-doors, to roam about the pastures and meadows, and explore the far corners of the hayfields. How pleasant it was just to lie about in the tall, soft blue grass on a bright June morning and, with a boon companion or two, just to listen to the clear call of the meadow lark from a distant fence post and the wail of the killdeer in the neighboring slough; to watch the cows in the shade of the cottonwoods, switching their tails for dear life and swinging their heads from side to side in a vain endeavor to reach the pestiferous flies that had entrenched themselves on their sensitive hides just beyond reach; or to turn on your back and gaze up at a clear blue sky, with perhaps a few feathery and fleecy clouds far above, seemingly immovable. How full and rich life was in those irresponsible June days of our boyhood.

Of course, after I became the proud possessor of a twenty-two caliber Ballard rifle, I often became a real hunter. But of game on the prairies at this time there was little left. In the winter, to be sure, there were rabbits; and tracking and shooting rabbits furnished many a day's pastime, over corn fields and along hedgerows. Since I never used a shotgun I had to trail my game to their nests and shoot at rather close range, and while at rest. Ducks and geese seldom stopped in our area on their seasonal flights, except along the Illinois River some twenty miles away, and occasionally on the temporary ponds in our fields during the early spring. Prairie chickens were still common. In February and early March their booming and clucking, heard from their roosting places across the fields, were sure harbingers of spring and pleasant morning sounds of the opening year. They were shy and took to the air long before the hunter came within gunshot of them, unless taken by surprise, and even then your first intimation of their presence was the loud whir with which they shot away. It took an expert marksman to bring one of them down with a small rifle. Once I shot one through the head with a twenty-two Ballard at a distance of two hundred yards; but that was an accident.

Tame pigeons, of which we always had a large flock about the barn, were easier to get. But they, too, in time became suspicious of the boy with a rifle. Occasionally, I was able to pick one off the roof of the cattle barn. Sometimes when they sat on the edge of the metal eaves trough, I was able, by creeping up on the opposite side and resting my rifle on the corner of the barn, exposing only enough of my own head to get a glance across the sights of the rifle, to get a shot at close range. But that also took rather accurate shooting for a small boy, since only the head of the pigeon showed. I do not know whether or not the old eaves troughs are still doing service; but if they are, one could find a number of bullet holes through the one on the east side of the building, and each hole represents the life of a pigeon once saved.

But I did not confine myself to shooting legitimate game. That was still the time when boys were permitted to kill birds of all sorts, song birds included. Not because we were cruel or naturally bloodthirsty. We did not want to see birds suffer, and we enjoyed their song. But seemingly, I did not see the inconsistency of enjoying the song and at the same time killing the songster. What was a gun for if not to shoot with, and what was there to shoot, except birds! There were no laws in Illinois at that time against killing song birds. There were no societies for their protection. And there was little education in the schools in this direction. Fortunately, since then, a better day has dawned.

We made some discriminations of our own, however, in the absence of law. Birds were not all alike. There was the turtle-dove, which we never thought of harming the slightest. I think we were told that this was a sort of sacred bird. It was mentioned in the Bible, especially in connection with Noah's ark. Anyway, it did no harm. The red-headed woodpecker, on the other hand, had everybody against him. There was not the slightest question about the justice of killing him. Just why the red-head should be such an outlaw, and so friendless, I never knew; he did not seem more of a nuisance than many others. It was, perhaps, because of his habit of drilling holes into buildings and trees wherever he could. His nest was usually to be found in the rotten bough of some old tree where picking was easy. He was always busy. His rat-a-tap-tap could be heard any time of the day in our orchard, or among the willows in the cow lot. He attacked buildings as well as trees, delighting especially in boring holes through the sides of vacant buildings. I believe that every little white schoolhouse in central Illinois was decorated with one or more of these holes, right under the ridge pole in the gable end, bored through by some enterprising red-head during the summer vacation. One brave bird was even wont to wake us up in the early morning by rapping on the steel wheel of our windmill, which was better than an alarm clock.

Between these two extremes, the turtledove and the red-headed woodpecker, we classified the birds as to their just claims for exemption. The catbird, although a sweet singer, but with a bad reputation as a cherry eater, and perhaps partly because of his feline name, was almost in the same class as the red-head. The robin, blackbird, and sparrow were all legitimate game. In the turtledove class were the thrush, meadow lark, wren, and bluebird. Against these the farmer could find no charge.

Any task that took me out into the pastures was regarded as play, even though it may have been classed as a chore. Going after the cows in the evening was never a burden. Often the cows came home of their own accord at milking time, especially if they had been without water throughout the day. Sometimes they came in response to our "Sook, Boss, Sook, Sook." Frequently we had to go after them. As they neared the cow lot they fell into single file, thus wearing a narrow winding trail into the milking pen. This trail was always a nice warm, soft path, for the barefooted boy who perchance had to find his way into the pastures on a chilly, dewy morning.

Especially when the stock was turned into the lower forty after thrashing, getting the cows was an added pleasure; for in the extreme southern end of the field there was still a swampy stretch of virgin prairie that had never been tiled, nor put under cultivation. It was always a pleasure to hear the liquid call of the red-winged blackbird and the mournful cry of the plover, who rendezvoused in this bit of marsh land. The place was a favorite resort also for snakes and dragon flies, or "snake feeders," as we called them. But I never had any fears, for I always rode old Bill when I went after the cows in the lower forty.

"Old" Bill, by the way, as we affectionately called him, and who was not old at all, but only a middle-aged horse, was the finest saddle horse I ever knew. He was a large, showy black animal and, when under the saddle, carried his head high and pranced about like a cavalry charger. He shied at every unusual sight and at every possible opportunity. He was not only a horse of fine appearance and showy action, but he was the easiest rider I have ever known. The average horse travels either in a trot or a gallop. The first is too uncomfortable for the rider, and the second too fast. But Bill had a gait all his own, a steady, easy swing, like a comfortable rocking chair, something between a canter and a gallop, that made riding a pleasure. We always rode him in a lope, which he seemingly could adapt to any speed desired. To perform any task, therefore, on the back of old Bill, like bringing in the cows, inviting the thrashing hands, or even going after the doctor, was always a supreme delight. He was not a good driving horse, being inclined to be somewhat skittish, but that did not detract from his value as a riding horse.

But Bill to our boyish minds had one rather serious fault, which marred his otherwise perfect score as a saddle horse. His internal organs in the region of his stomach were rather loosely hung together, for every time he fell into a lope, a peculiar hollow sound like the gurgling of water from a jug, keeping time with every swing of his body, would emanate from that region. The abdominal region was the part of the human anatomy which we never mentioned in polite society; and a noise that called attention so conspicuously to Bill's stomach was embarrassing to the rider, especially in the presence of the big girls. But out on the open road and in the broad pasture lots we easily forgave the showy black this trifling defect.

Much of my leisure time during these years was spent in the old shop, one of the most interesting places on the whole farm to the small boy, if it is well stocked with tools and wheels and parts of broken machinery. Like most boys, I was always interested in making things, things I was constantly in contact with on the farm or had seen at medicine shows and the county fair—hayracks, thrashing machines, juggler's tools, whistles, everything in its season. Old blind Pete, the "pain killer" peddler who, with his wife Maggie, often stayed overnight with us on his annual rounds and who claimed to be somewhat of a phrenologist once, after examining the bumps on my head, prophesied that I would be either a carpenter or a preacher. Because of my partiality for carpenter tools, as well as for other evident reasons, my parents were inclined to believe that it would be the former.

While I had an inventive streak, I was actually devising practical labor-saving contrivances, always labor saving, and dreaming of others that would materialize some day and make me rich—oatshockers, cornshuckers, and a device by means of which by pulling a lever at the barn entrance, the grain and hay would automatically fall into the feeding troughs of the horses; and by pulling another, the harness would fall on their backs. Everything was moved with levers. In these days of electricity, machinery is started by pressing a button; but that was the age of steam, when we started things by pulling levers.

For a period of several years there was a mania among our acquaintances for inventing perpetual motion. Even several of my uncles were seized with the craze. One of our neighbors worked at a device by which air was forced into a cylinder with a screw which, in turn, furnished the power for operating the screw itself. The trouble with this device was that he could never get it started. Uncle John, satisfied with a little less than perpetual motion, constructed a pump that was to be worked by a huge spring, but when he discovered that it took as much man power to wind the spring as to work the pump, he gave it up. Even my father had some mysterious wheels and springs lying about the shop for several years; but when he was elected to the ministry by lot, his new burdens choked out his inventive propensities.

But the champion inventor among my relatives was an older cousin, Joe Camp. He spent practically his entire life "inventing something." His chief venture, on which he spent, or misspent, his whole life, was a "power machine," as he called it. He never admitted that it was perpetual motion. The contrivance consisted of a complicated series of levers, wheels, shafts, and wires, at one end of which power was applied, and at the other, increased power was produced. Because no one understood the working of the machine, its inventor was regarded as a great genius by his acquaintances. Frequently, Joe set a day when it was to be tried out. But always there was some little fault in the workmanship that needed correction. Finally his money ran out and he formed a little stock company to help him to continue his work. Hearing, somehow, that the United States Government had offered a prize of $50,000 to the successful inventor of perpetual motion, Joe, and my brother Joe, who had bought some stock and thus became a sort of silent partner in the affair, wrote President Cleveland for information regarding the truth of the rumor. Whether President Cleveland ever answered the communication I was never told by the writers.

But Joe never lost faith in the ultimate success of his invention. "You might as well try to lift yourself up by your bootstraps as to make something out of nothing," I told him one day. "That is what they said about Edison, too," he replied. For thirty years, to his dying day, he kept up his hopes. Success was often just around the corner, so he thought; but Joe never caught up with it. He finally died without realizing his life ambition; and his power machine rests today, somewhere in his old workshop, a mute reminder of a life misspent on an unrealizable dream.

Our evenings at home in those days, especially during the busy summer season, as I remember them, were more or less cheerless. There were no eight-hour work days on the farm then. We worked early and late. Between the late supper hour and early bedtime there was not much for a boy to do, even when he was not dead tired from a hard day's toil. There were no radios, nor graphophones even, no telephones, no rural mail, nor parcel post. Except for the local weekly, a Bible and concordance, and a book on horse diseases, my father's library contained few books, and none of interest to a boy of thirteen. There was literally nothing to do but go to sleep; and usually we were tired enough to go to bed early and sleep soundly.

Occasionally in wintertime we might indulge in such innocent games as domino. Or as we sat about the dining room table, we might be led by my father's rather high-pitched though not altogether unmusical voice, in such favorite hymns of his from the *Gospel Hymns* as

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer
    That calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne
    Make all my wants and wishes known.

Mother never joined in these songs, although she had a fairly good voice. She never had time, even during the long evenings of winter.

Mail order catalogues were found in every country home. Montgomery Ward furnished us with many a night's entertainment, as did also a cheap jewelry firm in New York, by the name of John Lynn and Company, where for a few cents you could get solid gold watch chains and cuff buttons, and other bits of decorative knick-knacks dear to the heart of every growing boy just beginning to get interested in his personal appearance. The purchases, of course, were few, but it was a pleasure leafing through the catalogue, nonetheless.

From the advertisements in such cheap papers as *Comfort* and *Farm and Fireside,* published at Augusta, Maine, I sent for everything that was free, from a sample of a corn cure to a ninety-three-dollar sewing machine. I received more mail through the post office than all the other members of the family combined. This almost developed into a deluge of fake medicine announcements, samples of cheap storypapers, and suggestions of get-rich-quick schemes of all sorts, after I had sent ten cents to a mailing list agency to have my name and address inserted in their mailing list of suckers. For more than a year I was flooded with this kind of reading matter; and, although it was of limited interest and of no worth, one of the greatest pleasures of my weekly Saturday evening visit to town was the anticipation of finding a full mailbox in the post office. The agency had made a mistake in spelling when transcribing my address. All agency mail was addressed "Metmacora," instead of the correct spelling. Once in a while I found written across the face of the envelope, "Try Metamora." I did not know then that this was the suggestion of some mail clerk to help the letter reach its proper destination, but thought it was directed to me, warning me against using a name that was not on the map. I had heard that it was a crime to tamper with the United States mail, and it was some time before I could completely rid myself of the fear that I might be guilty of some serious offense.

In the early spring season we might find some pleasure in looking through the various brilliantly colored seed catalogues that were liberally distributed among the farmers at that time of the year by the nurseries and seed houses, with their fine red and yellow apples, green cabbages, purple grapes, and many-colored roses. The names of Salzer, Burpee, Vaughn, and Maule are still familiar to me.

And so our evenings were inclined to be short and of no particular interest. We smaller boys usually went to sleep long before we went to bed. As far back as I can remember, it was customary in our family to close the day with evening prayers. Long before Mother was through with her day's work, Johnie and I had fallen asleep, curled up on the kitchen floor back of the cooking stove. It was with considerable urging, usually, that we were awakened at the hour of prayer; and we were more asleep than awake as we knelt by the sides of our chairs. But I tried hard to be awake by the time my father reached the Amen. To be caught asleep, with head resting on the chair, after the others had all risen, was a disgrace and showed a woeful lack of interest in the serious things of life. It was for this reason, no doubt, that a certain phrase of Father's prayer, which evidently had been memorized from a prayer book, fastened itself indelibly in my memory. The expression was the German phrase *Mond des Nachts,* but what it meant I never knew. It came, however, just a minute or two before the Amen and served thus as a signal of the end.

Although the whole of life at this period seemed somewhat of a holiday, there were certain marked days which, because of their special interest, might well be called red-letter days. Chief of these was the Fourth of July celebration, an event to which we looked forward for weeks and remembered for months afterward. Metamora, being a county seat town, celebrated every year. For weeks before the great event we hoped and prayed for a day of sunshine; and great was our disappointment if it turned out otherwise. The Fourth, coming as it did at the end of corn plowing time and a few days before haymaking, could be enjoyed by the farmer with a clear conscience, for he could take a day off without neglecting any important work.

The day was usually ushered in early in the morning, sometimes before we boys were out of bed, by the sound of booming cannon from our village three miles away. If the day started bright and clear, we arose with light hearts and went about our morning chores in gay spirits and with a deliberation not known on ordinary days. By nine o'clock the long stream of horses and vehicles from the east began to file past our home, along the dusty road, all headed for the county seat. Men, women, and children of all ages, dressed in gay holiday attire, and in a holiday mood, passed by in all sorts of vehicles: whole families in big overflowing carriages, or if they came from the "Low Dutch" settlement in Linn township, perhaps in farm wagons; boys on the backs of big, tired plow horses which kicked up a cloud of dust with every step of their clumsy Clydesdale hoofs; some in two-wheeled sulkies, all bedecked in the national colors; all supremely happy, looking forward to a day of great fun.

But the happiest of all were the young swains who, all dressed up in the latest fashions, seated in shining piano box top buggies with their best girls by their sides, were driving their highest stepping carriage horses, with both harness and buggy all covered with blue, red, and white celluloid rings, and flags and streamers. To them this was the big day of the year. For many, this was the beginning of a friendship that ended in a life-long partnership. For weeks they had agonized over the uncertainties of this occasion. If the girl on whom the country boy had set his heart consented to help him celebrate the Fourth, he had about won his suit; but if she refused, there was little further hope. For the boy in the country had but one girl, his best; and she, like Mary's little lamb, went with him everywhere he went. And so the Fourth of July was the day when many a country lover, if he had a horse and buggy, began his suit for a life mate.

On this particular Fourth of which I am speaking, Ben, Pete, John Camp, and I had decided to spend the day together. Pete had agreed to hitch up his broncho to his brother's sulky and call for Ben and me on our way down to John's home, which was only a short distance from town, and where we were to leave our broncho for the day. We arrived in town just too late for the big parade, which the businessmen and some of the country organizations had put on; but the square and streets were full of people. The whole countryside evidently had come in to celebrate the glorious day. Old farmers were gathered in clusters, talking over farm prospects, no doubt; young married women, wiping the perspiration from their red faces, squalling babies in arms, followed by broods of two or three a little older, in danger of being run over in the general scramble, were edging their way along the crowded sidewalk, pretending to enjoy they knew not what, their young husbands in the meantime visiting one of the five overcrowded saloons in the village, quenching their thirst; young country lovers from the "timber" to the west, bedecked with flags and badges, a sack of peanuts in one hand, the other free to help themselves to the contents of the sack and occasionally generously offer some to their feminine partners; small boys of all ages sucking barber pole candy sticks and throwing lighted firecrackers at the feet of timid girls running loose everywhere; lemonade and popcorn stands in every corner, "nigger baby" and cane booths, and various games of chance all over the shady park in the square—all this we saw as we mingled with the boisterous crowd.

We four boys began our tour of inspection of everything there was to see, and first we began with spending a bit of our money. I had fifty cents, Ben had a dollar, and the other boys, I believe, a quarter a piece. We started in by buying a bottle of pop each; of course each paid for his own. Then Ben bought a bunch of fire crackers for ten cents, and I a sack of peanuts. John reluctantly saved the rest of his quarter for the time being. All morning we wandered aimlessly about, keenly interested in every unusual sight and sound. Everything seemed strange and new. It took very little to attract our attention—the clever sayings of the lemonade venders, the small boy setting off his firecracker under a tin can. Frequently we ran across boys of our own acquaintance, always in groups; it seemed that none of the country boys dared appear by themselves in the big crowd; especially interested were we in some of the big boys we knew, who appeared with their best girls perhaps for the first time. We thought they looked sheepish, as though ashamed of being caught by their young acquaintances.

We visited all the candy booths and spent our money freely, so long as it lasted, on an assortment of pop, lemonade, and peanuts. Once, succumbing to the gambling spirit within us rather than to the urge of hunger, we all invested in a five-cent prize box of candy. Ben drew a big yellow stick pin shaped like an elephant, Pete a butterfly, John a shining red marble, and I a nice gold ring, which I wore the rest of the day. Time passed rapidly; before we knew it, the various family groups had scattered about everywhere under the shade trees, enjoying their basket dinners and reminding us that it was high noon. Although my stomach had begun to rebel against the morning's mixture of sweets and drinks, and all appetite had been more than satisfied, the lure of the unusual rather than the pangs of hunger drew us over to a lunch counter near the corner of Abersole's grocery, where Pete and John each spent their last dimes for a ham sandwich and a cup of coffee, and I the last but one.

In the afternoon we parted company. Ben and Pete, whose tastes ran along lines slightly different from mine, went to Wilson's pasture near the east end of town, to see the ball game between the Roanoke Blue Socks and the Metamora White Caps and to watch the sack races and the greased pole contest. John and I decided to remain in the park for the speaking and the band concert by Spencer's Band from Peoria. The speaker of the day was also from Peoria, and thus a man of importance in our eyes, for Peoria was a big city of 50,000. His speech was preceded by "a few remarks from our distinguished citizen and fellow townsman, Honorable Joel Ranney." Back in the late seventies, Mr. Ranney had spent one term in the state legislature, and ever after that he had been an "Honorable." On every Fourth of July celebration he sat on the speaker's stand, and no public occasion was ever complete without a few remarks from "our distinguished fellow citizen." It was well that the village made much of its prize citizen, for he was the only "Honorable" they could ever boast of; some years later, after he had become too old to appear on public occasions, he was succeeded as a public institution by a citizen only slightly less distinguished, "Squire" Fran Giehl.

The band concert was the climax of the day. A brass band always had an indefinable attraction for me. Its music transformed the whole world for the time being. It made me forget all the small and unpleasant details of the everyday grind of life and lifted me up into a magical realm of unrealized fancies and high resolves. Its ceasing was like the ending of a beautiful dream. Thus, when the band concert ended, I had little interest left in the remaining events of the day.

"I'm ready to go home," I said to John. "Let's go to your house and run your new thrashing machine."

"All right," John replied, "but I'd like to see the bicycle race first."

"I'll set 'em up to a glass of milk shake over at Pelz's drugstore; I still have a dime left," I added.

John, whose money had all been spent for some time, readily agreed to this compromise, and we soon found ourselves busy with his make-believe thrasher.

A few hours later, Ben and Pete walked into the barnyard, seemingly tired, but well pleased with the day's adventure.

"Come over to the barn," Ben yelled to us, as he and Pete started in that direction.

"Whatcha got?" I wanted to know.

"Don't ask too many questions, you'll find out," he answered.

Back of the barn, with many a cautious look around the corner, Ben finally pulled from his pocket a package of tubes of white paper, tipped with glass at one end.

"Where did you get 'em?" I asked.

"At Joe Earl's," Ben replied. "They're good," he added as he passed them around.

"Try one," this to John, who seemed hesitant about accepting the proffered gift.

"Naw, I don't care for any," John answered.

"All right," returned Ben, "there'll be that many more for the rest of us."

With many a suspicious glance down the road and about the barnyard we applied a match to our first cigarettes.

"Ugh, tain't half bad," Ben remarked.

"Tain't as strong as a buggy whip," Pete suggested.

"Makes a nice curly smoke," I concluded.

Smoking cigarettes was considered a greater crime then than now for a small boy; and poetic justice, no doubt, would demand that all of us should have become deathly sick as a result of this escapade. But since this is a true story, I must stick to the facts and report that according to the best of my recollection, the results were not as dire as they perhaps should have been. I may say in passing, however, for the comfort of such as believe in the law of retribution, that in the case of a similar offense some years later, poetic justice was amply satisfied.

The recollection, as well as the anticipation of an agreeable event, is often the source of more pleasure than actual participation. The fifth of July, and many of the days following, were a continuation of vicarious joys of the Fourth. The memory of the bright sunshiny day, the holiday spirit, the big crowd, the brass band, the excitement of the races, as well as the tales of saloon fights which the hired hand, John Durst, reported the next day, and the gossip about certain of the boys who got the mitten on that momentous occasion—all this kept the memory of the great day living and green for weeks following the celebration itself.

Our whole play life, too, was affected for months. Galloping on the back of Old Bill we often tried to spear a series of rings suspended from a wire which we had strung from one corner of the barn to the big maple near the road. On Sundays, when our folks were all gone and some of our cousins had come to visit us, we picked up handkerchiefs from the ground as we clung to the saddle on Pete's pony, running at full speed. Once I lost my hold on the horn of the saddle and, falling to the ground, nearly broke my neck. Back of the barn we practiced high and broad jumping for the rest of the summer. When our friends came to us we had a foot race, but we never tried to climb the greased pole, nor catch a greased pig.

Our town was too small to attract the big circus. Consequently, I missed that endless source of delight to the small boy. But Peoria, like Winchester in Sheridan's famous ride, was only twenty miles away and, occasionally, the advance agents for the big show scattered along our country road large yellow and red handbills with gorgeous pictures of elephants, lions, all sorts of wild animals, bareback riders, beautiful ladies, and wonders of all sorts. Sometimes the big boys of our neighborhood and the hired hands, returning from the city, would tell us wonderful tales of the big parades, fancy riding, the funny clowns, and the other mysterious and wonderful things they had seen. Barnum was a familiar name to us boys, though none of us had ever seen him or his show. We knew all about Jumbo the big elephant and Tom Thumb the little man. When some years later we read in the papers that Jumbo had met his death in a railway accident, trying to save the life of a baby elephant, we felt that we had lost a personal friend.

But if we did not have a circus, we did enjoy an occasional medicine show. The one I remember best was an Indian medicine show which included among a number of other performers about a half-dozen real Indians. They sold an Indian remedy called "Sagwa." Each evening there was an entertainment, consisting of a varied program, including simple jokes with frequent reference to local favorite young men, a Punch and Judy show, clever tricks performed by a juggler, and it always ended up with an Indian war dance. The juggler was a wonderful being in my eyes. He could toss four or five balls into the air and keep them all going without dropping a single one. He performed wonderful feats with tin plates revolving on the ends of walking sticks and other spectacular balancing stunts. For months afterward I had ambitions to be a juggler, but I never succeeded in keeping more than three balls in the air at one time.

The Indians, I am quite sure, were bona fide Indians. The war dance, with its weird music and blood-curdling war yells, the tomahawking of imaginary enemies on the floor, all of which was as much a source of pleasure to the Indians as it was of wonder to us, transplanted a bit of rapidly vanishing frontier realism to our quiet little village. The year 1888 was not so far removed from that of the Custer massacre in 1876 that such a performance would not be a matter of lively interest to the young boy who had read of that disastrous event in his school history.

The whole purpose of the entertainment, of course, was to attract a crowd, to whom the sponsors of the show might sell a very wonderful, miraculously preserved Indian remedy for about all the ills of mankind. Many simple-minded people fell, and still do, for this tradition of the virtues of a secret Indian medicine. At the close of each night's performance, the manager of the show, who usually spoke of himself as "doctor," harangued the audience on the wonderful healing powers of Sagwa, and sent several of his Indians among the audience to distribute bottles of the remedy among such as suffered from some real or imaginary physical ailment. I can still see the old Indian chief, big and fat, marching up and down the aisle in the tent, extolling in his deep guttural tones the virtues of his medicine.

"Sagwa, Sagwa, somebody want Sagwa?" "Good for rheumatiz, Sagwa, good medicine, Sagwa, Sagwa, cures bellyache, Sagwa, one dollar the bottle, Sagwa somebody want Sagwa?" A goodly number of victims of the chief's eloquence went home each night with a bottle or more of the precious Sagwa tucked away under his clothes somewhere.

We boys attended this show for several nights and might have continued for the rest of the week had it not been that we were responsible for a little break in one of the programs. One night a friend of ours, whom we usually called John J., a boy about my own age, with a little more than the average boy's desire for fun, went with us into the tent. Everything went well until two comedians came on the stage carrying on a humorous conversation. One jokester would ask his companion some silly question, which the other was to answer with an equally, prearranged, silly rejoinder. John J., having heard the same show in the neighboring village of Washington the week before, knew some of the answers. During a critical period of the conversation, after the first comedian had propounded a question, the answer to which was to be particularly funny, John J. could not resist the temptation to yell back the answer from his seat in the audience, to the great surprise and chagrin of both comedians. The audience laughed, not at the clever answer of the responding partner, but at his discomfiture. Both performers were furious and looked daggers at our corner of the tent, as though ready to seek revenge. John J. hastily ducked out under the rear of the tent and scampered away. The rest of us followed. We did not dare return after this, but we had more fun bragging about our exploit than a few more nights at the show would have afforded us.

7

The New Teacher

Country boys of working age in Illinois forty years ago were not expected to waste much time in school, except during a few winter months when there was nothing else to do on the farm. Even then, the winter's schooling was regarded as a welcome release from the hard work of the year and an opportunity for social diversion, rather than a desirable means of improving one's mental faculties. Work usually ended soon after corn husking, but this particular year, the year of the big storm, the late fall days were unusually mild and warm, giving us ample time to turn under acre after acre of the sod in the old pasture which my father had decided to put into corn the following spring. Although glad, as a rule, to quit school in the spring, we were equally as eager to start again in the fall, not so much for the purpose of satisfying our hunger for knowledge as of meeting the big boys and girls of the district, some of whom we had not seen all summer.

This year, especially, I was anxious to start in. A new teacher had come to our school, a man teacher, the first man teacher for years. Amanda Martin had been an old maid, and cross, and the boys did not like her. The new teacher was a likable young chap, sociable with old and young. He had already done an unusual thing by visiting many of the homes of his pupils, including our own. Everybody liked him, and several of the older girls and boys who had already quit school were going to start in again during the winter months. Evidently school was going to be something different this year, and we were all anxious to begin.

But the balmy, dreamy, almost Indian-summer-like days continued unusually long. Day after day we prolonged our plowing, expecting or at least hoping at the approach of each evening that the following morning would find the ground frozen hard enough to make the continuation of our task impossible. It was not until one morning well in December, however, that my father, coming in to breakfast from the barnyard, said, "Well, Henry, I guess you can start to school today."

I had long been awaiting this order, and I was not unprepared to take advantage of it when my father broke the welcome news. I had seen to it that my cheap new jeans suit was ready; my slate pencils and a big red tablet had been stored away in my bureau drawer upstairs for more than a month, awaiting this day; and so, armed with my big, new *Geography,* with its fascinating maps and its pungent smell of printers ink, and my brief Barne's *History,* with its thrilling picture of Sheridan calling "Turn, boys, turn, we're going back," and Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga, ordering the surprised commander of that English stronghold to surrender in the name of the great Jehovah whom he did not recognize and the Continental Congress which had not yet met, I happily started up the road to the little white schoolhouse just across from the corner of our lower pasture.

The new teacher was not a disappointment. He was as amiable in the schoolroom as outside. He was not at all like the old maid teachers we had had, insulated with a special dignity that set them apart from ordinary folks. But he made us feel free and easy in his presence; he talked to us like the ordinary folks we knew. At recess he played black man with us; at noon he told us about his school days at the state university at Champaign. He had met some Mexican students there from the Province of Chihuahua, he said, as he stepped to the board and showed us on the map just where it was. It was the first time I had ever heard of the place, and I have never forgotten it since. He evidently loved poetry and wanted his pupils to cultivate a love for it, too, for on the blackboard all about the room he had written extracts of poems by Longfellow and Whittier—

memory gems, we called them, which he had us memorize. We hardly thought of him as a teacher at all and never spoke of him by that name among ourselves. He was always known as Willie Whitmire.

I cannot recall many of the details of that first day or of the days immediately following, but the impression I carried away of the new teacher during the winter was that of a young man of an attractive and appealing personality, devoted to his calling, with a sympathetic interest in young boys and girls, himself still a youth. Having attended the state university for a time, he was perhaps more familiar with the subject matter which he taught than with the manner of its presentation. He had never been to the Normal school. He perhaps never knew pedagogy by that name. But he had to a large degree what no mere course in methods could have given him, and without which no real teacher deserves the name—character and personality, and withal the gift of vitalizing every subject he touched.

I remember particularly the lessons in geography. In a description of the volcano Popocatepetl, he built up a conical sand pile with an ink bottle buried within the top, into which he poured some kind of chemical, which made the miniature mountain spout out flame and smoke like a real volcano. The experiment may not have had any scientific value, and I presume the experts in pedagogical methods today would smile at this method of teaching geography, but Popocatepetl ever afterward meant something more to me than a hard name or a little brown spot on the map of southern Mexico.

But the best thing Willie Whitmire did for me was to introduce me to a new world of whose existence up to that time I had been entirely ignorant—the world of romance and adventure that lay hidden away in the great books of the ages. Up to that time I had never read through a whole book, nor had I seen many besides my school texts. There was no library in our school, nor in our home, nor in the whole neighborhood, for that matter. The only English book in our combination writing desk and bookcase—drawers for the table linen below, writing desk in the middle, and book shelves above—was a big volume in green covers called *The Royal Pathway of Life,* which an itinerant preacher had left at our house one time on trial and for which he forgot to return. The only part of the book that I remember was the pictures, of which there was a copious supply.

Our school readers, with the exception of a few farm poems by J. T. Trowbridge and Alice Carey, and such selections as "Woodman, Spare That Tree," and "The Wonderful One-Hoss-Shay," were made up largely of "extracts" which were of little interest to us. Beyond these few selections I knew nothing of the great storehouse of literary treasure for children or for grownups. I knew few nursery rhymes. My only make-believe world, outside of what I could construct out of the meager material of my own prosaic environment, was that inhabited by Santa Claus and the Easter rabbits; and even these I had outgrown by this time.

Such was the limited horizon which shut off my vision from the alluring world of romance lying just beyond the round of humdrum experiences that made up nearly the whole of my farm-boy life at the time the new teacher came to District Number Six; and I can never repay the debt of gratitude I owe him for introducing me to this hidden world by way of the complete works of the great masters, instead of the "extracts" which were found in our school readers. It mattered little that some of these selections might be classed as second-rate productions from the pens of their masters; *Enoch Arden* stirred my imagination at that time beyond anything else that Tennyson ever wrote, for it was *Enoch Arden* to which we were introduced.

I still remember clearly, as though it were yesterday, all the details in the opening scene of the story, as well as the exact place on the recitation bench where I sat when we began to read the story—the long lines of cliff, the narrow winding street lined by red-roofed houses and leading to the barrows and hazelwoods beyond, the tall-towered mill, the narrow cave in which Philp and Enoch quarreled over their mate and Anna wept for company.

That evening for the first time in my life I took home a schoolbook to study, and before I went to bed I had read the whole story. The next day, and for weeks following, the narrative became the basis for our reading lessons. We read it and reread it until every detail became so firmly fixed in my mind that to this day, nearly forty years later, I can still recall every scene in the unfolding story without missing a single one.

Other selections followed during the winter—the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," the whole story from beginning to the end, not only bits here and there such as we found in our readers, illustrating different styles and types of literary form, the "Deserted Village," and other narratives well suited to arouse a country boy's imagination and hold his interest. My appetite for reading was now thoroughly whetted; and devouring such few books as came my way became an obsession. My most vivid impressions of this year, as I recall them now, are scenes from literary masterpieces, just as of earlier years I remember most distinctly birds and green fields.

My desires soon outgrew the meager offerings of reading matter furnished by the daily ten-minute class recitation; but nowhere in either school or home was there anything to make up for this deficiency. Fortunately, however, slender as were my financial resources, I was soon able gradually to accumulate a little library of my own. On the front cover of the *Enoch Arden* which the teacher furnished our class was the heading, "Elzevir Library," and at the bottom, "John B. Alden, Publisher"; on the back cover, a long array of alluring titles—at a price that even a bankrupt country boy could afford to pay. *Sinbad the Sailor* could be bought for two cents; *Rip Van Winkle* for the same price; *The Lady of the Lake* sold for six cents; and the *Life of Julius Caesar* for eight; *Robinson Crusoe* was quoted at thirteen. In fact, for a quarter or two, wisely spent, you could buy a whole winter's supply of reading matter.

Blessings on the head of John B. Alden, whoever he was! He perhaps little realized what a friend he was to the isolated country boy with a passion for good books, but without the financial resources to supply his demands. He furnished whole evenings of pleasant company with famous literary and historical characters; and many fascinating, though stolen, hours during the day of explorations in the world of romance, which at least one boy, living amid a barren rural environment, gratefully remembered for many years afterward.

My selections from the Elzevir Library were made at random and must have been chosen largely because of the attractiveness of the titles rather than from any knowledge of their contents, for I had no one to guide me in my choices. Judging from a reading list made at the time, and which I have before me now, I marvel that I made so few mistakes in my blind groping after what was best. That first year I read "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," the "Civilization of Asia," Emerson's "Essay on History," and that most alluring of all boys' stories, which Washington Irving says has caused more boys to run off to sea than any book that has ever been written: *Robinson Crusoe.* The second year, at the age of fourteen, I took to biography, reading the lives of Cromwell, Hannibal, Caesar, Patrick Henry, and the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.

It is a dangerous thing to arouse a boy's passion for reading without, at the same time, furnishing him with an available supply of good reading matter. Turn a boy loose in a good library, and I believe he will instinctively choose the best rather than the worst. But in the absence of anything better, he becomes the victim of whatever cheap storypaper may have had access to his name in some mailing agency. From Augusta, Maine, I received such papers as *Comfort, Hearth and Fireside,* and others of a similar nature. This must have been in my fifteenth year, for in my reading list of this year, I find only a blank with the honest confession written across the page, "A good deal of trash." Fortunately, this was only a temporary relapse seemingly. The next year I again find such entries as *Tom Brown at Rugby, Grandfather's Chair,* and the *Last Days of Pompeii.*

It was but natural that the books I read should have had some influence on the bent of my life interests. I always associate *Robinson Crusoe* with my love for the sea. Washington Irving, who became my favorite boyhood author, always suggested that beautiful season of the year known as Indian summer. Cooper's *Prairie* gave me an interest in the western plains that I have not lost to the present day. Anything that would suggest the prairie would arouse my instant interest. Burning over the stubble fields in the fall was none the less exciting because it suggested a prairie fire. My love of adventure was greatly stimulated by these early excursions into hitherto unknown imaginary lands. Winding country trails, leading no one knew where, and railroad tracks converging to a point somewhere in the distance have always had a peculiar fascination for me, beckoning me on to the land of the unknown that lay just beyond. The phrase "Far

Away and Long Ago," the title of a recent book, still makes a strong appeal to my imagination.

My tastes were wide and varied. A two-cent pamphlet entitled "The Red Headed Family," by Maurice Thompson, started a new interest in birds and the great out-of-doors. It was the typical boy's interest, of course, the kind that still pursued its objects with a gun rather than a camera. Nevertheless, the added knowledge, meager though it was, acquired from this little pamphlet and others like it, gave me a new appreciation of the great world of nature about me. With new zest now during the months immediately following, either alone or in company of some of my schoolmates on Saturday afternoons or on other holidays, I spent much time tramping along the hedgerows looking for the nest of the thrush or climbing the big cottonwoods to examine the eggs of the blackbird or the young brood of the yellowhammer.

I did not spend all my time, however, during that first winter of my intellectual awakening, in the reading of interesting stories and the study of nature, fascinating as that was. I still retained my zest for the playground and the open fields. Dutchball, blackman, and hare and hound were not any the less alluring than they had been before we had heard of *Enoch Arden*. Hunting rabbits was as keenly enjoyed as ever.

All too swiftly passed this winter under the new teacher. Before we knew it spring had arrived. One evening, as we came home from school, we found the new hired man, Jake Kam by name, a little squint-eyed German from the western "timber," out at the front gate, with a big wad of tobacco bulging out his right cheek, and whittling at a stick with his big pocket knife. It was the first of March, the date when hired men began their year's service, and farmers all paid the interest on their notes and renewed their contracts. Our school days were numbered now, and it was but a short time until preparations for the spring seeding would begin.

The earliest work of the spring might consist of a variety of tasks, such as cutting down hedge fences or cleaning up the orchards. All of this could be done while the snow was disappearing from the fields under the increasing warmth of a genial March sun and pools and large ponds of water were formed in the low places, which sometimes became temporary overnight stopping places for occasional flocks of waterfowl making their way to the far north for the season's breeding.

A hedge, I have since learned, may be any sort of a densely growing plant that can be used as a border between two land areas. But to us a hedge meant a very definite thing—a thorny tree planted in a thick row along farm boundaries which, if permitted to grow to its full stature, would develop into a good-sized tree producing a seed in the form of a large, soft green ball about the size of an apple, but which was usually kept trimmed down to a low matted growth, making a very efficient fence against both horses and cattle, though it was scarcely hog-proof. This hedge, the Osage orange, was widely used on the prairies of Illinois in the pioneer days where fence rails were not available and before barbwire was invented. First barbed, then smooth woven wire fences replaced the hedgerows. But in the middle eighties these hedge fences were still quite common. Trimming hedge under a hot August sun along tall corn rows was one of the irksome tasks during the late summer, though cutting it back in the cool days of March, often the hired man's first work in the spring, was not regarded with similar disfavor. For the small boy, however, the hedge fence had its compensations. In the summer it was the favorite resort for the thrush and song sparrow, and in winter for rabbits. The passing of the old hedge fence was no doubt a great boon to the hired man, but at the same time a distinct loss to the young boy who lived more or less in a world of romance, of which there was none too much on these bare, monotonous, prairie fields.

In those days, the earliest field work in the spring was clearing the corn fields of the old stalks, preparatory to the spring seeding. Late in February or early in March, while the ground was still frozen, usually in the early morning, a long pole with a horse hitched to each end would be dragged back and forth across the field, breaking down the standing stalks. These would then be raked up into windrows with a big homemade wooden rake, constructed specifically for that purpose and which required the strength of a full-sized man to operate. These rows were then burned. In this part of the work the small boy could make a full hand and it was usually a task to his liking. Whoever heard of a boy who did not like fire? Any kind of drudgery, no matter how monotonous otherwise, like clearing the old trash out of the garden or gathering the broken, rotten limbs from the orchard was more like play than work if it meant a fire.

Often we left the burning of the stalks for an evening party when all of us boys and the hired man, and sometimes the neighbor boys, would burn over a whole forty-acre field. There is a peculiar fascination about a fire at night in the open field that appeals especially to the primitive within all of us. The men, followed by their receding shadows as they hurried from one row to another with flaming cornstalks like torches high above their heads, their voices sounding strange and far away as they called to one another across the field; the rows of fire stretching out into the darkness, shooting sparks into the air all about us; and the bright skies reflecting the fires from neighboring fields in every direction—all this seemed very primitive and heroic to an impressionable boy of thirteen.

Seeding time itself is a glorious season. One fine morning this particular spring Joe, the hired man Jake Kam, and I went into the east twenty along the side road to begin the year's seeding. It was a lovely, mild morning in early April. A warm wind blowing for several days from the south had dried up the little ponds of water left by the early March thaw. The warm sun shone red through a hazy morning atmosphere. It seemed almost like Indian summer. From across the fields we could hear the booming and clucking of a flock of prairie chickens that for some weeks had made their roost on a knoll in a neighboring field of fall plowing to the south of us. Not far away a meadow lark was singing to his heart's content. The air was still, and all about us there was the quietness and peace, almost like that of a proverbial Sabbath morning. Familiar sounds came to us across the fields from all the neighboring farmyards—cackling of chickens, the shrill call of Uncle Pete's guinea fowls, the defiant gobble-obble of Cook's venerable turkey cock, the deep barking of old man Minger's big Newfoundland driving the cows out to pasture, a farm wagon rattling down the road toward Metamora to the west, and even a lively conversational tilt between neighbor Wüthrich in the barn and his wife in the kitchen, pitched in a tone that is usual among folks who live in the open country, where spaces are wide and distances great. All this we heard distinctly from the far corner of the field, where we began the spring seeding that quiet April morning many years ago.

Not all the spring days were as pleasant as this beginning one. There were many raw, windy days in March and April. Following a harrow all day long, driving a three-horse team, stumbling along over a freshly-plowed field of clods, with a strong chilly wind blowing the dust into your eyes and ears and all through your clothes, with chapped lips and sore feet—such an experience was far from pleasant. Unhitching time in the evening was a most welcome relief. But these days were not many, and even such as there were often had their compensations; for during all this time, for several years, I utilized every available minute of my nonworking hours in devouring some new acquisition from the Elzevir Library—moments that afforded brief glimpses into the great outer world of history and romance, which made me forget all the drudgery of the day.

During the brief nooning hour, while the horses were leisurely munching their dessert of hay on top of a substantial meal of corn and oats, and Joe and Jake were taking their noonday nap on a bed of hay in the stable gangway, I was lost in Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," or Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Washington's "Farewell Address" I tried to enjoy one spring from the top of a cornstalk cutter as it bumped up and down the corn rows in a raw March wind. Franklin's autobiography I read through bit by bit while seated on the handles of a corn plow, giving the tired horses a much-needed rest from time to time. How welcome all these odd moments were! and what delight a slow drizzling rain, lasting the entire day, when I enjoyed whole hours of uninterrupted bliss in the haymow up to the ears in a book. It was, no doubt, because I utilized only my leisure moments and did not neglect my regularly assigned tasks that my father seemingly did not object to my literary inclinations.

To my own limited supply of reading matter I added from time to time such books as I could secure from other sources. Some I borrowed from my Yankee schoolmates, who were more inclined toward literary matters than the Swiss and Germans, others from several of my uncles, who in a moment of generous impulse had been inveigled by some smooth-tongued book agent into buying a popular subscription book describing a recent great disaster or recounting the achievements of a late departed president or other public character more or less conspicuous. Pete loaned me the *Story of the Johnstown Flood* from his father's meager bookcase; Ben let me read his *Buffalo Bill and the Wild West* which I enjoyed one whole glorious Sunday all alone, while the rest of the family had gone to spend the day at the meetinghouse. I went without dinner that day and never missed it. For many years afterward I visited every Buffalo Bill performance that came within reach, until the show itself had degenerated into a very tame resemblance of its early self and my own enthusiasm for Indian battles and broncho busting had been somewhat dulled by the weight of increasing years. It mattered little at this time, of course, that this reading matter was not high-grade literature; the world it depicted was as alluring and attractive as though it had been the creation of Shakespeare or Tennyson.

Coming back to the fall of the momentous year described above, two events fill a large place in my recollections—the Harrison-Cleveland campaign, and my father's first subscription to a metropolitan newspaper, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean,* an ardent champion of Republican principles. While there were two candidates in the field, I remember very little about Cleveland, except that he was said to wear a number nineteen collar, sufficient proof to our juvenile minds that he was not fit for the presidency, for we were all ardent Republicans. In fact, nearly all our relatives and most of our circle of acquaintances were of the same political faith. The poor farmers west of Metamora, the roughnecks about Germantown and Worth Township—"bushwhackers" we called them—and the saloon keepers in our town were generally Democrats, but the prosperous farmers in our end of the township were usually of the party of Lincoln and Grant. In reality, we hardly regarded a man as respectable if he wasn't a Republican. Uncle John was the only one among all my relatives who was a Democrat, but that did not surprise us. To my mind he was always a little contrary and inclined to take the opposite side on any generally accepted proposition among our circle, if for no other reason than merely to start an argument. He often did unusual things. One Christmas Eve, in order to disillusion his children of the Christmas myth, he filled their Christmas stockings with corn cobs instead of the presents they expected; and so, if one of our uncles had to be a

Democrat, we were all agreed that Uncle John was the logical candidate.

Uncle Pete, on the other hand, was an uncompromising Republican. To him the fate of the country was wrapped up with the fortunes of his party. He had just recently moved from the farm to the village, and thus became a bit more closely involved in political and other worldly affairs than his country relatives. He even carried the flag at the head of the parade in one of the political rallies in a neighboring town that fall, an unheard of breach of the faith for a Mennonite of good standing; for Mennonites at that time, although they might vote their convictions on election day and express their partisan preferences, were yet not supposed to hold office and by no means take part in such a worldly demonstration as a political rally. However, good old Uncle Pete evidently was not reported to the church elders, for I do not remember that he was disciplined for this fall from grace.

The Harrison campaign was conspicuous for its exciting rallies and noisy parades. The Republican party, in order to capitalize on the popularity of the candidate's grandfather, revived some of the campaign methods introduced for the first time in 1844. Monster parades were staged, in which log cabins and cider barrels again played a major role. Marching and riding clubs were organized, in which men were dressed in elaborate uniforms and carried torches attached to long handles. Jake Kam became a member of the local club and spent many an evening during the period of the campaign in the village, drilling for the various parades throughout the county.

This torch Jake left with us when his term of service expired after corn husking. For a number of years it did duty for various purposes, but was especially handy in the spring for burning cornstalks. It was while we were using it for this purpose one night, that we barely averted what might have been a serious fire. Returning from the fields, Joe was carrying the torch high above his head. Passing through the orchard, he spied a sleeping hen on one of the branches of an apple tree, within easy reach of his torch. Just to see what would happen, he applied the torch to the chicken, which immediately burst into flames and flew terror stricken straight for the straw stack near our big cattle barn. A heroic race after the flaming chicken by three boys as badly scared as the victim of their thoughtlessness and quick action with the burning straw was all that prevented a serious conflagration with corresponding property loss.

My interest in political matters was greatly stimulated about this time by reading the *Inter-Ocean,* a staunch Republican paper to which Willie Whitmire called my attention one evening when I met him on the road on his way home from school. He gave me a sample copy which I found so interesting that I induced my father to subscribe to it. Because of his confirmed Republicanism this was less difficult than I had anticipated. Although not greatly interested in politics as such, my father had held several local offices, including that of road commissioner for the township, and he always ran on the Republican ticket. For some years the *Inter-Ocean* came to our house until it was finally merged with another Chicago paper, and it continued to be an important source of information of the great world beyond our own little farm community.

Another bit of news that was of great interest to all of us during this fall and winter was the account of the Haymarket riot in Chicago. I sat up far into the night on the Thursday evening when the *Inter-Ocean* came, immersed in the story of the trial of the anarchists who threw the fatal bombs which killed a number of policemen. I still remember the names of all those who were convicted and the sentences given each. One of them, by the name of Spies, was the subject of special interest, because Uncle John told us he had known the man personally some years before as a hired man on a farm near Chillicothe, a river town which we always linked with Pekin and Peoria as a refuge for tough characters.

The remaining few years in the country school I cannot recall as distinctly as that first winter under the new teacher. Willie Whitmire taught another year and was so successful that the directors decided on the experiment of a special summer session for him, the only summer term, I dare say, ever held in the history of the district. Of the teachers who followed, I remember little. I must have been an industrious student, for our county superintendent, Lyon Karr, suggested that I apply for an appointment to West Point, a suggestion I never took seriously. Even if I had qualified, my father would not have given his consent to my going.

It was during this period that I definitely decided to continue my studies beyond the country school and maybe become a schoolteacher like Willie Whitmire. In fact, it was he who first suggested the possibility to me. This was a rather bold step for me to take. No one among my relatives, nor among the entire group of Mennonites in central Illinois for that matter, had ever taught school or even attended an institution of learning beyond the little red schoolhouse itself. It was expected of the boys in my circle that they would all become farmers in course of time like their fathers; and the girls, farmers' wives. And all of them did. The life ambition of all Mennonite parents was to leave each of their children a farm of at least eighty acres; and a surprisingly large number of them were able to do so. In fact, many of them believed it would be impossible to be a good Mennonite except on the farm.

Schoolteachers were not highly regarded at that time among our prosperous German farmers. They were placed in the same economic class as the hired man and were generally recruited from the Yankees and other less prosperous classes in the nearby villages of Metamora and Eureka. Most of them were young girls just graduated from the local high schools, or old maids; the former with too little experience, and the latter with too much. Men teachers were rare. And so the farm boy who decided to become a schoolteacher, by choice and not from necessity, was not regarded as rising in either the economic or social scale, but as being too lazy to live up to his opportunities on the farm.

But in spite of this prevalent opinion among my neighbors and relatives, I do not recall that my father ever raised any objections to the carrying out of my plans. Being the third of four boys, my help on the farm was not as indispensable as that of my brothers; besides, the fact that from childhood I had seemingly been afflicted with more than the usual small boy's share of stomach and other aches may have reconciled both of my parents to my desire to seek a livelihood through some channel other than the heavy work of a farmer's life. In fact, I had often heard them discuss various kinds of work that might be suitable for one of my delicate constitution, including such occupations as harness maker, tinner, merchant, and other trades which, because they demanded less outside work, were supposed to be less arduous than the work of the farmer. I do not remember that they ever mentioned school teaching. I had evidently not impressed them up to that time with any talent in that direction. Be that as it may, although my determination to leave the farm for some more congenial pursuit was due to the inspiration of the new teacher, it was made possible by the consent of my parents to continue my studies beyond the district school. In the spring of my fifteenth year, after I had gone through my fifth reader for the third consecutive year and my big history for the second, I went to Eureka, which in the meantime had stolen the courthouse from Metamora, to take the county central examination, where I ranked third in a list of twenty-eight, as evidence that I had finished the country school and was prepared to enter the local high school in the fall.

I cannot close this chapter without again expressing my gratitude to the most inspiring teacher I ever knew and who did more to arouse my life ambitions at a most critical time in my boyhood days than anyone else I have ever known since in high school, college, or university—Willie Whitmire. I do not know where he is now, whether alive or dead; but, wherever he may be, I gratefully render him this tribute. After leaving our district he studied medicine and eventually became a physician in one of the western states. He may never have become a great doctor. He might not have achieved fame as a scholar had he continued an academic career. But I know that he inspired me to launch out on a course from which I have not wavered one moment since, and for this he has my eternal gratitude.

8

High School Days

In view of the fact that country boys in my community seldom went to high school and Mennonite boys never, it was not surprising that my father, who shared the traditional views of his neighbors and brethren in the matter of higher learning, although somewhat more liberal than they, consented to my attending high school only during the winter months, between the late fall and early spring farm work—at most, not over three months. His innate sense of impartiality, giving all his sons an equal chance and granting me no privileges not enjoyed by my two older brothers, may also have played a part in his decision. At any rate, I did not enter school until after corn husking, more than two months after the opening of the fall term. In these days of rigid curriculum regulations, such a handicap might prove an impossible barrier to the completion of a high school course, but at that time the requirements were not so rigid, especially in the smaller schools. Anyway, where there is a will there is a way; I was determined to keep up with the class through study at home. I still have a keen recollection of a certain balmy starlit September evening, when I rode back home from Metamora on the back of Old Bill with the precious texts, Brown's *Algebra,* Hart's *Rhetoric,* and Baker's *Natural Philosophy*, as physics was then called, safely tucked under my coat.

To comprehend the intricacies of an algebraic equation and to understand why *a* plus *b* should be equal to *c* would have been sufficiently difficult even under expert guidance, but to attempt it unaided and alone seemed for a time the height of audacity and folly. By dint of several hours of hard work each evening, however, and occasionally on Sunday afternoons, I managed to master the subject sufficiently well to go on with the class when I entered school a little later.

All through the long monotonous days of corn husking the tedious farm tasks were forgotten in the pleasant anticipations of the new social and intellectual world just ahead. Pleasant anticipations tempered somewhat, however, by certain misgivings as to whether I would be entirely comfortable in my new surroundings. I was a green country boy, with no social contacts with young people other than those of our rural school district and country church. Added to my natural timidity, there was a feeling of self-consciousness, almost bordering on an inferiority complex, due to my Amish Mennonite heritage. Metamora was a village of but six hundred, and although a county seat, it had the social standing and political and economic importance of the usual small country hamlet of that size. But to me the boys and girls here were "town" boys and girls; and, so far as I was concerned, as far above country boys in social culture as though they had lived in Peoria or Chicago. The girls, especially, I felt would have much fault to find with the ways of a shy, Mennonite country boy.

Although I have forgotten nearly all the details of those first days of my high school experience, I have a general recollection of a sense of regret for having started at all. I kept aloof at first from both boys and girls, although I had occasionally seen several of the latter, so that they were not total strangers to me. Anna was the youngest sister of my last teacher in the country; Bessie, the red-headed daughter of our postmistress, had often handed me our mail from box number twelve; Ethel was Ben's girl; and Alice, the attractive daughter of the local furniture dealer, I had noticed several times on the streets of the village during the previous summer. Knowing her as one of the popular girls of the school I was soon to enter, I admired her in silence and at a distance. The only conversation I remember having had with any of these girls during these first few weeks was my reply to Bessie's demand for a contribution to some school fund of which she was the treasurer. Using what must have been an unusual word in my vocabulary, though I had no doubt often seen it in print, I replied that I would be glad to contri*bute* something to the cause.

Ben, who had been in town for several years, and had thus already become well acquainted with its young people, was generous in his attempt to introduce his green country cousin to the ways of town folks. With his assistance and by hard study at home I soon found that both in my class work and social standing I was not far back of the other boys in school; and before the winter was over my regrets for having entered were left far behind. I enjoyed to the fullest the class work as well as the social life. Not the least of the contributing factors to the pleasures of the latter were our indoor games during the winter. The school building contained four rooms and housed the whole school system of the town. The high school was given one room and one teacher; the grades the other three, but only two were used. This vacant room we turned into a play room during the noon intermission and other vacant periods. Dan Tucker, pop goes the weasel, ducks, and other favorites of the school boys and girls of a generation ago were just the games to give timid young people a chance to express their preference for one another without openly confessing it.

I soon caught up with the other students in my classes, in spite of my two-months handicap. At the end of the second month the principal informed me one morning that I had made the highest grade in the school for the month just past. This was the result not of superior capacity, but rather of hard work, in spite of my three-mile trip back and forth each day, and the evening and morning chores. I was perhaps the only student in the whole high school who took his books home at night for study in the evening.

Ben, on the other hand, was an average student; but he was a leader in most of the nonacademic activities, good and bad alike, and was given his full share of attention by the high school teacher, who, because of his high distinction, was called "Professor." One noon, coming back to school from dinner, after an unusually severe reprimand from the "professor" for a serious breach of the rules, Ben pulled out a revolver from his coat pocket.

"Is it loaded?" I asked.

"Sure it is," Ben replied.

"What are you going to do with it?" I ventured, somewhat nervously.

"Shoot old man Condon," he returned, "if he gets smart again this afternoon like he did this morning."

Fortunately "old man Condon," who perhaps never knew of his narrow escape, did not get smart again that afternoon; and so far as I know is still alive, though he long ago ceased to wield the vigorous birch. Of course, the professor was in no real danger. Ben was just indulging in a bit of youthful braggadocio. The gun wasn't loaded, and it was only a toy pistol after all. But I did not know that then.

The enlarged vision resulting from my high school studies and new social contacts widened more than ever the gap between the intellectual world in which I lived during the week and the more circumscribed Mennonite world into which I was drawn back on the "Sabbath." None of the preachers to whose sermons I was forced to listen had the faintest knowledge or appreciation of the great fields of literature, history, or science to which I was introduced through my courses, meager though they may have been. From Monday to Friday my emotions were stirred by the poetic sweeps of Shakespeare and Tennyson and my imagination stretched by a study of the stars in their courses or by following the campaigns of Caesar and the victories of Napoleon. On Sunday I sat for several hours on a hard straight-backed bench in a plain little meetinghouse, listening to a farmer-preacher discoursing in German on the sins of wearing a gold watch chain or attending the county fair. Much of the time, though, I was present in the body, but absent in spirit. Had I taken the preacher seriously, the gap would have been impassable; but because I knew his limited outlook, though sincerity of purpose, I never permitted his circumscribed view of life to influence me beyond the Sunday sermon period. Thus I kept my faith, my school, my church, and my friends—all at the same time, though the last two never shared with me the first and second. My intellectual life was a solitary one.

How well I remember one fine Sunday morning in January, when a visiting preacher from Indiana by the name of John S. Coffman preached an English sermon in our church in which he showed himself thoroughly at home in the fields of literature and history and other subjects which I had been studying in school. He seemed a kindred spirit, so different from our own uneducated preachers. Riding home with us, he told me a number of interesting things about the stars which I had just been reading about. If we only had a preacher like Coffman, I thought, how much more interesting church going would be!

Some of these farmer preachers are still holding forth in their pulpits as old men now, with an outlook on life as circumscribed as that of forty years ago. I was only one boy going to high school then, and my protest would have counted for little; but now there are hundreds where then there was one, and their united voice against an old order that is inadequate to meet the needs of a new day will eventually result in a new type of leadership more abreast of the times. Some of these good old bewildered brethren attribute this growing restlessness among the young people to the natural perversity of the new generation; but some of us know better. It is the high school that is causing them trouble.

My winter's course terminated with the beginning of spring plowing. But I continued my studies and general reading throughout the spring and summer months during the long evenings after the day's work was done, on rainy days, Sundays, and such odd moments as were not employed in some necessary farm work. My mother informed Aunt Mary, "Henry always has his nose in a book." A good old farmer neighbor once said to me relative to this practice, "I suppose you will keep on until you land in Washington," whatever that meant. He, no doubt, had in mind the highest possible achievement of an American citizen, just short of being president, perhaps.

Fortunately, just at this time I was able to add a number of valuable books to my growing library. My father had just bought the farm of a Yankee neighbor by the name of Wash Herron who was more literarily inclined than his more practical and prosaic German neighbors. When Wash and his family moved out of the house I discovered to my great delight that they had left behind them in one of the upstairs rooms a priceless bookcase filled with the most interesting titles—Irving's *Life of Washington,* Bayard Taylor's *Views Afoot,* Franklin's *Autobiography, The Life of Patrick Henry,* and numerous other biographies and classics, all of which I eagerly devoured during the following months. I learned later that this little library really belonged to the local school district of which Wash was a director. Fortunately for my ease of conscience I did not know this at the time.

During the following winter Pelz's drug store offered for sale a large assortment of paperbound volumes in a series known as Lovell's Library from which I was able to purchase at a price ranging from ten to twenty cents such classics as Irving's *Life of Columbus,* his *Prairie,* and *Life of Goldsmith* (which gave a most delightful picture of the literary life of London of that time), the *Life of Burns,* the poems of Byron, Homer's *Odyssey,* and others in the same class. Later I secured other paperbound volumes from various publishers, as well as cheap cloth editions from Montgomery Ward, until I had accumulated quite a respectable collection of titles, though it might have had little attraction for a collector of de luxe editions.

This modest little library, which each year grew a bit larger, became as the years passed on one of my most highly prized possessions. After I left home later on to attend college, and finally to teach, on each return it was my chief delight to leaf through old volumes which had been so much pleasure in my youth to collect and to read. My father, although without a wide acquaintance with books in general, was not unsympathetic toward my reading propensity. Being adept with carpenter's tools, he made a large bookcase for me in which to preserve my treasured volumes. This he later duplicated as my purchases increased. I still have these cases, a little old-fashioned now, filled with the old volumes, paper covers and faded yellow leaves and all; but I would not trade them for the finest de luxe editions in the world.

Of course, it is not to be inferred that I confined myself to the world's greatest classics. I read everything in print that came my way—cheap stories as well as the great masterpieces. Among the former was a story I had never heard of before nor since, a story about the adventures of an airship called the "Greyhound" which stirred my imagination as nothing else had ever done before, and which infected me with a fever of adventure from which I have never recovered. The inventor and pilot of this airship was a certain Frank Reade from Readsville, Iowa; and the publisher of the story, which I took to be a true account, was F. M. Lupton of New York.

To my delight I soon found that there was a whole series of Reade stories at five cents each, describing all sorts of strange appliances, making romantic expeditions into strange lands. One was a flying machine something like that of Darius Green's with wings that were moved with an electric battery, and which carried its pilot over country and city high in the air as easily and safely as though it were a big bird. With a steam-driven conveyance shaped more like a locomotive than a modern automobile, Reade and his two quarrelsome companions, Pomp, a Negro, and Barney, an Irishman, traveled all over our western frontier, camping in isolated groves along unknown streams, living on buffalo meat and other wild game, a terror to the Indians and a source of wonder to the occasional trappers they happened to meet. In a carriage drawn by an electric man they crossed the deserts of Australia, fighting native bushmen and running down ostriches. With another airship that held itself aloft by means of vertical propellers and pushed itself forward with horizontal ones, they crossed over the heart of dark Africa, landing occasionally to interview its people and study its wild animals.

These accounts of strange adventures to the unknown corners of the earth, made in these unique appliances, had a wonderful attraction for me. For several years, before either airplanes or automobiles had ever been heard of, I experimented with an iron man who could draw a vehicle over the ground at lightning speed and with a combination balloon and airplane, something like a modern Zeppelin, whose course could be directed through the air at will.

Of course, I could not keep all these wonderful plans all to myself. I decided to share them with cousin Pete as the most reliable and useful confidant. Pete, who had access to his father's blacksmith shop, was soon hammering out, under my direction, mysterious bits of iron rods and wheels that were to go into the construction of our iron man. These, as they were completed, were carefully hidden in out-of-the-way places about the barn and cow sheds to await the day of grand assembling of all the parts into the full-fledged man.

Meanwhile, I proceeded with the airship. I had the village blacksmith construct such mechanical parts as I could not make myself and had Pete bring them out from town one evening and deposit them in the old orchard near the big willow tree as he passed by. Later that night I found them and carried them safely into the attic of our old shop where neither my father nor any of my brothers ever ventured. From Joe Conrad, our local dry goods merchant, I ordered a big cigar-shaped balloon manufactured out of "bed tick."

Finally, when sufficient of the parts of my invention had been constructed and collected, I decided on a trial. The great day had come. Like Darius Green, I chose for the trial a Sunday morning when the rest of the family had gone to church and I would be alone for at least a half day. I decided first to test out the balloon; for if that refused to function according to specifications, the remaining paraphernalia would be useless. Instead of digging a trench and building a fire to inflate my bedtick balloon, as I had seen it done at a balloon ascension in Metamora one Fourth of July, I decided to utilize our kitchen chimney for this purpose, as being both more convenient and less expensive. Building a heavy fire in the kitchen stove and finding my way to the kitchen roof, I soon had the balloon above the chimney, expecting to see it rapidly fill with warm air and assume its required shape of a cigar. But nothing of the sort happened. It hung limp and shapeless as though nothing were going into it at all. I now discovered that in the choice of my material I had not reckoned with the fact that "bed tick" was not gas proof. That was the reason my airship refused to inflate.

Oil perhaps would fill the open spaces in the loosely woven cloth, so I descended to the kerosene barrel and gave the bag a thorough soaking. A second time I brought the shapeless mass of canvas to the top of the chimney. But before I had time to test out the effectiveness of my experiment the hot sparks of the kitchen stove ignited the kerosene soaked cloth; and instantly the bag was a mass of flames. It was only with the use of the short ladder which, fortunately, I had brought to the roof in order to reach the chimney top that I succeeded in hurling the flaming mass from the roof without burning down the house.

This ended my experiments with airships, though not the dream of some day being able to fly. I never divulged the secret of the near tragedy of that Sunday morning; and nobody ever guessed that the mysterious wire frames and clumsy propeller shafts that were scattered about the back yard for years were the wreck of an idle dream and the relics of a fruitless attempt to do what the Wright brothers and Count Zeppelin later actually accomplished.

As for the iron man, he never reached the trial stage. Pete tried hard to keep his secret. But his father, suspicious of Pete's unusual activity in the blacksmith shop, finally learned the truth. Pete actually showed him a copy of one of the Reade stories I had loaned him. That settled my partner's participation in our joint enterprise. Uncle John, like most of the substantial Mennonites of his day, had little faith in a make-believe world, not even in Santa Claus as has been noted elsewhere. The term *novel* especially had a sinister meaning for him. Assuming that because of my innocence and ignorance of the world's evils, I was unaware of the corrupting influence that followed the reading of fictitious tales and fairy stories, he warned me against corrupting Pete's morals any further by furnishing him with additional loans of the Reade series.

Believing these tales to be actual experiences and determined to convince Uncle John of that fact, I wrote a letter to Frank Reade of Readsville, Iowa. I was very much disappointed some weeks later to get my letter back, marked "No such address known." Still unconvinced, I decided to make further investigation. The *Inter-Ocean,* our Chicago weekly, was running a question and answer column at this time, in which it agreed to answer any question sent in by its subscribers. This, I thought, was an opportunity to prove that I was right. In due time I got my answer. Although greatly elated in seeing my name in a Chicago paper, I was again keenly disappointed to read that nothing was known of either Reade or Readsville, Iowa. I was not altogether convinced even by this, and the belief that these adventures were not fictitious, but real, died hard. I had no scruples, however, about corrupting Pete's morals with vicious literature. He was not of the reading kind. So far as I knew, the only books he ever read through were the *Johnstown Flood* and *Ten Nights in a Bar Room,* both of which I believe had Uncle John's approval.

I passed the summer and early fall pleasantly enough, dreaming of strange adventures in far-away lands and sharing with Washington and Patrick Henry and other heroes the gallant deeds of the long ago. The anticipated pleasures also of another winter in high school greatly lightened the drudgery of the long hot days in the dusty cornfield and the monotonous days of fall plowing. I no longer had the misgivings of the year before as to my ability to hold my own among the town young people. My short experience of the previous winter gave me ample assurance that the coming school term would be an enjoyable one. It was again after corn husking when I entered.

Among my courses this winter were several of the sciences. Mere introductory courses, to be sure, based on elementary texts—Steele's Ten Weeks series in all of them. We had no laboratories and but a single room and single teacher for all the high school subjects. Naturally, we acquired but a mere smattering of knowledge of the plant and animal world. But I am not at all sure that my love for the great world of nature about me would have been stimulated more deeply by the dissection of a thousand disgusting snakes and bad-smelling frogs.

I did not confine my studies to those offered in the classroom. Among my extracurricular courses was one in astronomy, also based on the Ten Weeks series—a mere elementary text on the subject, but sufficiently elaborate to give me a glimpse of the great universe that lies just beyond our own little world. It was in connection with this study that my father bought me a small telescope.

It was customary in our family for my father to present each of his boys with a watch on his sixteenth birthday. I was the third in the family, and my sixteenth birthday came just about the time of my interest in astronomy. Not having much use for a watch anyway, and being more interested in studying the stars above than in being able to tell the exact time to begin the afternoon's plowing, I broke the news to my father one day that if it met with his approval I would prefer a telescope to a watch. Being a wise father he consented; for about twenty dollars, consequently, I purchased from Montgomery Ward a fairly good glass—much better, I venture to say, than the one with which the original inventor of the instrument discovered the four satellites of Jupiter.

Like Galileo I first turned my glass upon that planet, and to my great delight discovered the four moons for myself. I next turned to our own moon where I could plainly distinguish what my text said were mountains with their shadows and great plains. I watched the sun for hours, following the mysterious spots that slowly crossed the big disk every few days. New stars, unseen by the naked eye, were brought within my vision; stars which I was told were themselves suns and centers of solar systems like our own. Stronger glasses than mine I realized brought still other worlds into view. In fact, no instrument had yet been invented that could penetrate the far distant spaces of the universe, if indeed there are any such, that are entirely void of worlds like our own. Nothing so stretched my imagination and so impressed me with the smallness of our own little world and especially the insignificance of our own petty little troubles when viewed against such a background as this brief excursion into the field of astronomy. I may not have added much to my store of scientific knowledge, but I learned a valuable lesson in tolerance and humility. Ever since, I have been recommending to every high school boy and girl a brief course in descriptive astronomy, not so much for the facts as for the enlarged vision.

My father shared my enthusiasm in the discoveries of the new telescope. He made a tripod for the instrument that could be adjusted to any angle and would hold it steadily upon any fixed object. He even built for my benefit a large platform on the windmill, protected by an iron rail, from which one could get a good view of the surrounding prairies for miles around.

By no means without interest to me were the contacts made with some of the village characters during my high school days. The original New England stock in the village was gradually being replaced by the descendants of the more recent German immigrants who had located all about the countryside. These latter were usually regarded as more industrious and prosperous than the "Yankees" but with less of American social and intellectual culture. The wealthiest man in town was a son of these early immigrants. He had moved to the village just a short time before. His name was Pete Schertz; "little Pete" he was called by his country relatives to distinguish him from a number of other larger Petes in the community. He was without much schooling, but his wealth assured him a position of some importance in the affairs of the town. He owned the local bank, the elevator and lumber yard, a hardware store and implement shop, and a business block. In fact, he owned the town.

He was a pretentious little man, impressed with his own importance, and walked about with a pompous little strut which the boys at the time thought was put on, though it may have been natural. He evidently thought his fame as the big man of the village had spread beyond his own native habitat. One day, accompanied by a friend while in Peoria where he had some business connections, he attempted to pass through the railway gate of the Union station without showing his ticket to the guard, evidently for the purpose of impressing his friend with the fact that he was so well known in his neighboring city that even the railway guards would recognize him and pass him as a privileged character, an honor naturally due him as the leading citizen of Metamora. The guard was not impressed, seemingly, for he made the usual request. "I am Mr. Peter Schertz of Metamora," the Metamoran ventured. "I don't give a d— who you are; I want to see your ticket," returned the gateman, to the very great humiliation of the little banker, but great amusement of his friend. This remark became a byword among us boys for many months, and always called forth a hearty laugh when reproduced, no matter how often we had heard it before.

Little Pete finally had a great fall. Losses through speculation on the Chicago Board of Trade swept away his entire fortune. He died some years later, penniless and brokenhearted.

While I was inclined to share the indulgent smile of his fellow townsmen and country relatives at the vanity of the wealthiest man of the town, I was more favorably influenced by the less wealthy, but more cultured, Easterners that still remained, because they represented more definitely the intellectual and cultural world in which I was interested. Jake Ray, one of the officials of the courthouse, whose son was a classmate of mine, well versed in the history and literature of the country, on occasions when I happened to meet him in the village park or on the street spoke interestingly about the great men of the country. Cass Irving, the editor of the local paper, had one of the finest collections of geological specimens in this part of the state, and a library of books and magazines though quite modest, yet far beyond anything I had ever seen. From him I first heard of the *Scientific American*. His father had built the old courthouse in which Lincoln had practiced law for a number of years; and Cass once showed me a letter which his father had received from the Great Emancipator. Conrad Rohman, a retired merchant, though not an Easterner, had known Lincoln well and had often pitched horseshoe with him. He told me a number of stories about the great man, one of which at least I never believed, though I give it here as Rohman told it.

In the early fifties Lincoln had as a client a woman who was being tried in the old courthouse for the murder of her husband. Feeling ran so high against her, and the circumstantial evidence was so strong that Lincoln, believing her to be innocent of the crime, but doubting his ability to free her, advised her to try to escape through the heavy woods just back of the poorly-guarded jail, and helped her to get away from the courthouse. The story never seemed plausible to me, but Rohman, who had occasion to know all parties in the case, insisted on its authenticity.

All these men seemed interested in my school work, partly, no doubt, because I was the first boy from my community ever to attempt high school. Their interest contributed not a little to my determination to continue the course of study I had outlined for myself.

As an impressionable boy of sixteen, I, of course, was not exempt from the little heart affairs to which boys of that tender age are sometimes susceptible. My parents did not approve of close association with town boys and girls, especially girls. Neither did I have much opportunity for attending the school functions of the school young people, for I drove back and forth from the country each day. But I found occasional moments, as boys will, sometimes stolen from tedious school hours or surreptitiously taken on Sunday afternoons in the spring or summertime to enjoy a stroll down the numerous lovers' lanes leading from the village to the woods beyond. Like Tom in the old poem, "Forty Years Ago," who cut his name on an elm and his sweetheart's just below, I cut mine with Alice's across a fallen log that bridged the little brook in a romantic spot in the hickory and hazel woods near the cemetery road. But unlike Tom's elm, my log had disappeared at the time of my last visit to the spot long before the forty years had passed.

I had now come to the end of my high school days. Although I had attended only two short winter terms of three months each, I had managed to keep up with the requirements of the brief two-year course and was told by the principal that if I remained until the end of the year I might graduate with my class. But I hardly dared ask my father for this privilege. I was needed for the spring work. So I again exchanged my school books for the plow and harrow in early March as I had done for the past few years.

Neither was a high school diploma necessary for a teacher's certificate, for which I had now decided to apply. The only qualification for the prospective teacher at that time was the passing of an examination in the common branches. This examination Ben and I took one Saturday in late May in Eureka which had now become the county seat, some six miles away. After spending an anxious day attempting to solve puzzling questions in arithmetic and grammar, and feeling fairly well satisfied with our day's work, we decided that on the way home we were entitled to celebrate in a manner befitting the man's estate to which we had arrived.

We bought several cigars and started for home on our two-wheeled sulky, then much in vogue among boys, drawn by one of our faithful old farm mares. As soon as we were safely out of town we "lit up." For a spell all went well, and we felt proud of the day's success. But presently I felt a sickening sensation in my stomach. Soon I slid off the sulky seat, and with my head on my arms dragged myself along behind the old mare who was glad enough to proceed at a snail's pace; and caring little whether I passed the examination or not, my only earthly concern for the time being was the ardent hope that I might recover, if I recovered at all, before I arrived home. Fortunately, we still had some five miles to go; by the time I had walked all that distance I had sufficiently worked off the effects of my first cigar to avoid all suspicion of the real cause of our late homecoming that evening. Ben, who felt but little better than I, and who was no prouder of our adventure, I think never told. Neither did I until just now.

This examination marked a turning point in my life. Although I did not know it then, it meant the termination of my days on the farm. I was seventeen years old, with a teacher's certificate assured. Soon I was to have a contract to teach a country school four miles from home at a salary of forty dollars per month. This would be considered a small salary now, but at that time it was considered a princely sum for a country boy as compared with the salary of a hired man who received only twenty, and whose wages set the standard among country folks for men's wages in general. The coming fall I would leave farm work in early September instead of December. Except for a few scattered summer vacations, I never came back to it.

9

Following Church

The Amish Mennonites were decidedly religious as well as an industrious people. Between religion and work there was little time for any other interests. This deeply religious spirit was an inheritance from their European ancestors, who for several centuries had been severely persecuted by both church and state because of their advanced views on religious toleration. Because of this persecution, as well as an exaggerated conviction gathered from their experience that the world is inherently evil, they developed a sense of aloofness from all those not of their group that doomed them to a life of spiritual and social isolation in their country homes on the prairies of Illinois, as well as elsewhere in America, lasting long beyond the period when the need for such isolation had passed. Their religious exclusiveness, therefore, was deep-rooted in their European experiences.

Exclusiveness fostered conservatism, which in turn perpetuated many traditional beliefs and customs among them generations after these had been discarded by the rest of society. The "world" came to include about everybody who was not an Amishman; and worldly things were still almost identical with what was worldly in the days of Jacob Amman in the seventeenth century. Because Mennonites for their religious convictions were once burned at the stake by the magistrates, when, of course, no Christian could be a magistrate, the same attitude toward the holding of office was retained in free America where at this time there was no thought of persecuting anyone for his religious beliefs. Opposition to the use of musical instruments, no doubt, went back to the days of the Reformation when in all the Protestant churches organs, like pictures and images, were regarded as relics of popery to be eliminated from worship.

Numerous worldly vanities—photographs, gold ornaments, and laces were based on literal scriptural prohibitions; some customs and practices rested on nothing but long-established traditions—bonnets, prayer caps, and aprons for women, and beards but no mustaches for men. But even the most rigid conservatism is never entirely innovation proof. At best it is only a retarding process. And so the Amish Mennonites, too, unconsciously followed the constantly changing social customs and practices of the world at large, though usually a century or two behind the main procession. Thus, at the time of which I am speaking, the prescription for aprons, beards, and broadfalls, the latter known among us boys by the name of "barn-door britches," had already been discarded; as had the rules against "boiled" shirts, "shingled" hair, and top buggies; hooks and eyes were just passing.

Our home was a typical Amish-Mennonite home. Although my father was rather liberal for his day in respect to the old customs, both he and my mother were of a deeply religious turn of mind and content to remain within the limits of the religious practices and social customs set up by the church authorities. When my father was elected to the ministry in my twelfth year, religion was given even a more conspicuous place in our home. Not that he became a minister by choice, of course. Mennonites were drafted to this calling by lot. In fact, to desire the ministry was a sure sign of unfitness for it. The election was left entirely to Providence, within certain prescribed limits. Every male applicant for baptism included among his vows at the time of his admission to the church a promise to accept the ministry in case the lot should unfortunately fall his way. Selection for this responsible position was one of the dreaded possibilities facing every married male church member of middle age with a little more than average talent; for the lot was cast only among such as had received at least a few votes from the congregation. The unwilling victim of this means of selection usually accepted his fate with a heavy heart, and not infrequently with a considerable show of unrestrained emotion. I was greatly impressed as a boy on such occasions with the seriousness of the minister's calling. The only other occasion on which I had seen strong men shed tears was at the funeral of some near relative; and so I came to regard these events as the two great tragedies of life.

When once selected there was no turning back. No matter how poorly equipped a man might be for fulfilling his duties, the congregation could not go back on the Lord who had made the choice. If he was unable to preach, he might at least read the opening lesson and recite a memorized prayer. If the Lord made a mistake, there was nothing to do but give Him another chance and cast the lot again. This was continued, if necessary, until someone was found who could preach. But in no case was an incapable selection ever released. In the Partridge church there were thirteen preachers at one time, four of whom were bishops who had joined the congregation from elsewhere, but all were of equal jurisdiction.

Well might such a newly selected preacher approach his task with misgivings. He was elected for life and received no support for his services. He was an ordinary farmer like his fellows, with no schooling beyond the few winters spent in the little log schoolhouse. He had no practice in public speaking and no preachers helps except his Bible and perhaps the church paper, the *Herold der Wahrheit.* For many of them it meant a life of hard study and endless regret for inability to measure up to the task imposed on them.

Although my father had no more than the usual amount of schooling, he possessed more than the average amount of ability and initiative. He was forty-four years old at the time of his election, and he served his congregation faithfully for twenty years, for which he never received a cent of remuneration. In course of time he developed into an eloquent preacher. During his later years he served as bishop of all the Amish Mennonite congregations of Illinois and of isolated congregations in neighboring states. He passed through the usual anxious and strenuous years of apprenticeship. The Bible and a concordance were his only textbooks. Many a night I remember seeing him, after he had already done a full day's work in the fields, and after most of the family had gone to bed, himself half asleep and often nodding in his chair, ardently trying to pry out the next Sunday's sermon, for the first years, no doubt, with considerable fear and trembling.

As bishop, his duties were quite arduous, since among the Amish Mennonites only a bishop could perform wedding ceremonies and administer Communion services. Weddings were celebrated in the home of the bride, never in the minister's house nor at church. There was no wedding fee, but it was customary to present the preacher with a handkerchief, which in an early pioneer day when even handkerchiefs had some value may have been meant for a fee; but now it served merely as a token of appreciation. I doubt whether my father was always paid his railway fare. I remember, especially, a journey he made one midwinter day to a wedding some twenty miles away. The ceremony was to take place on a Saturday afternoon. My father left Saturday morning and returned the next afternoon in an open buggy against a cold January wind, with the thermometer twenty below zero.

I can still see him now, many years later, returning over the wind-swept west road, just at sunset, an old shawl thrown over his head, reins wrapped around his shoulders, pounding his hands on his knees to keep them warm. When he came into the house we found that both ears had been frozen. His total remuneration in dollars and cents for this two-day trip through a January storm was a ten-cent handkerchief.

Not that he wanted any monetary return, of course. He perhaps would have refused it had it been offered him. It was a tradition of the church that the preacher must serve his people without pay. Menno Simons himself had much to say about hirelings who lead the people astray. Salvation is free—a fortunate fact for the congregation, but a little hard sometimes on the preacher. Fortunately, my father did not need outside support, being possessed at the time of a large farm and several boys to run it. But the same demands were made of other preachers who could not afford to give of their time so generously. There is naturally much of the spirit of self-sacrifice in the religious world, but one would have to go far to discover finer examples of it than among the Mennonite preachers of a generation ago, who gave themselves so unsparingly in the performance of the heavy duties thrust upon them.

We attended services at two meetinghouses when I was a boy, one located seven miles to the west called the Partridge church, pronounced "Patridge" by the older people; and the other six miles east in Roanoke township. My father preached in the Roanoke meetinghouse, but we boys all ultimately became members of Partridge. It was customary at this time for neighboring congregations in central Illinois to hold their services on alternating Sundays. This practice was the survival of an earlier day before there were any meetinghouses. Meetings were held in the homes of the members, rotating among the worshipers. As the original Partridge settlement expanded to the east, across the prairies beyond the timbered belt along Partridge Creek, meetinghouses were finally built at both ends of the settlement, one in the timber, the other on the prairie. Services were held alternately, though each congregation was a separate ecclesiastical unit, and few worshipers attended both services.

Unfortunately for us, at least so we thought then, we lived just halfway between the two churches; and so, having no good excuse for taking an "off" Sunday, we usually had to attend both my father's church and our own. Of the two, I preferred going to Partridge, especially because the timber road was much more attractive than the one across the prairie. It ran through our home village, always a place of interest even on a quiet "Sabbath" morning, and beyond that it followed the old stage road leading to Germantown and Peoria. All along the way this road was bordered with interesting old landmarks. Just beyond the village, at the fork where one branch turned off toward Washington, was a primitive old log barn built in 1831 by one of the old Mennonite pioneers, Peter Engel. Engel's son, also called Peter, later kept a tavern here at which, according to tradition, Abe Lincoln, then a circuit lawyer, often stopped for refreshments on his way to court at Metamora from the county seat at Tazewell County. It is entirely possible, of course, that the great man may often have whiled away an hour or two here, since he frequently passed this way and was fond of good company. A little farther on, the road passed an old tile factory where smoking kilns were always objects of curiosity. Then for three miles it led through virgin timber, full of thrills for the prairie boy with its strange sights and unusual sounds—the big elm and hickory trees, the yellow soil so different from the deep black loam of the prairies, the hazel bushes, the big brown squirrels skipping along the top of the rail fence, and the shrill cry of the saucy blue jay which never found its way to our prairie home. Just before reaching the little brick meetinghouse well on the way to Germantown we passed Hickory Point, an early road house, where we occasionally stopped for a drink of "pop"; and which in an earlier day, according to tradition, was the scene of many a drinking bout and other riotous occasions among the "bush whackers" of the region.

The prairie road to the Roanoke church, on the other hand, was a dull and monotonous thoroughfare, with no old landmarks of unusual interest to attract attention. It possessed but one redeeming feature. In the spring and summer when the black mud was deep and sticky on the main highways we could drive almost the entire distance over the smooth, clean sod of the unused side roads, which were hardly affected by even the heaviest rains. But even this advantage did not compensate for the hickory trees and the blue jays. The lure of the timber road may explain largely why I preferred the Partridge church to my father's on the prairie.

The Black "Patridge" meetinghouse, so named after the pioneer settlement along Black Partridge Creek, was one of the oldest Amish meetinghouses west of Ohio. It was a modest structure of brick, with a low roof and an annex in the rear called the "Kaemmerle" (little room) used as a consulting room for the ministers and a rest room for weary mothers with crying babies. Inside the main building there were four rows of straight-backed, home-made benches, two on the right or men's side, and two on the left reserved for the women. Through the middle ran a partition wall a little higher than the benches, dividing the sexes. Across the right-hand corner in the rear was a raised platform with a long bench and high table for the preachers.

The services, conducted in the German language, were long and dry, designed primarily for sedate adults, with little to attract a small boy. The day's worship began with a session for the preachers in the "little room," where the special orders of the day were decided on—who should deliver the introductory remarks, who preach the main sermon, and such other details as the occasion might demand. No preacher could be sure who would be called on to deliver the sermon for the day until this meeting. It behooved every minister to be ready every Sunday at a moment's notice, though each one was likely to take his turn. But since the Holy Spirit was to guide the speaker in what he was to say, special preparation was not thought absolutely necessary. After an hour or so in conference, during which the congregation in the main audience room spent the time singing old-time, slow-going hymns, the long line of ministers filed out of the "Kaemmerle" and each took his place on the long preachers' bench.

The introductory remarks by one of the newer ministers still serving his apprenticeship, or perhaps a deacon, varied in length according to the ability of the speaker and ended with a formal prayer more or less memorized from a prayer book. The main sermon was delivered by one of the more experienced ministers. It was usually of an exhortatory nature or a running commentary on scriptural passages, often copiously interspersed with warnings against the temptations of the world—fine clothes, questionable amusements, and such other worldly diversions in general as are dear to the heart of every unregenerated small boy. It was always too long; by the time all the ministers on the bench had testified to the truth of what was said by the main speaker, it was far past the noon hour. And we still had to travel over six or seven miles of rough country roads in an open buggy against a cold wind in winter, and in a cloud of dust or under a hot sun in summer, before our growing appetites could be satisfied.

Of course, we were not expected to sit quietly through four long hours of preaching without at least one prolonged visit during that time to the horsesheds in the churchyard. Beginning about twelve o'clock, and lasting to the close, there developed a restlessness among both the boys and the older men, which ended in a continuous stream passing in and out of the church door during that time. Outside we clustered about in groups in the horsesheds in winter, or out on the grass in summer, listening to our elders exchanging views on the best methods of carrying on farm operations or swapping news items of the week's happenings throughout the community; for this was still the day before the advent of the telephone, rural delivery, or the automobile. We always aimed to return inside for the closing exercises, preferably for the last song.

Through long experience we learned to sense quite accurately the best time to enter the church in order to be present at the close without sacrificing more of the pleasant associations outside than absolutely necessary. Sometimes we were kept informed by late arrivals from the inside. If elder Bachman had reached the story of Tobit in his sermon, we knew he was nearly through with the main discourse. If old man Güngrich had just begun his testimony, we still had some time to spare, for he was proverbially long-winded, having been known to pray for twenty minutes at a funeral in the presence of a bareheaded audience before an open grave, in a cold wind. But if Chris Schertz was the last man in the pulpit, we had little time to lose, for Chris never succeeded in adding many words to the few set lines he had memorized for such occasions in the early years of his ministry.

These truant hours on the church green seem very pleasant to me now as I recall them across the span of years. The dull sermons have long been forgotten; but the thrill of the churchyard visits lingers on. I would give much for some magic power that could call back again from the dead past, if but for a moment or two, these youthful experiences, to hear again the sound of the neighing horses as they whinnied back and forth along the hitching racks, and to listen once more with the ears of a sensitive boy to the sweet music of the old church melodies as they floated out to us through the open windows on many a sweet Sunday forenoon so many years ago.

The Sunday school was just being cautiously introduced in our churches when I was a boy. But my Sunday school recollections are few beyond the little colored "tickets" with Bible verses which were given us as a prize for getting our lessons and the yellow-backed German A B C primers from which we learned our first German letters, for, since the Sunday school was conducted in German we first had to learn to read before we could learn to understand. I suppose I learned some German and memorized some verses, but my most distinct recollection of these Sunday school lessons is the tickling sensation of Uncle Chris's beard on the back of my neck as he leaned over my shoulder to trace the letters across the pages of my yellow primer.

We also attended the schools of both churches, to which was added a third for one summer when my father, for the benefit of the young people of our community, opened up a Sunday school in our schoolhouse. I do not know the exact year of this last school, but I remember it best for the presence of a rather pretty girl that attended from a neighboring community, and as the summer when young men wore seersucker suits.

The young men of my boyhood days, by the way, were as much the slaves of passing fads as were the women, if not more so, a general opinion to the contrary nothwithstanding. Especially was this true among the Mennonites; for they strictly regulated the styles for their women folk, but not for the men. My mother was severely reprimanded one time by one of the austere spinsters of the church for sewing a little lace about the edge of her plain homemade bonnet. The young men followed in a way the changing fashions as they came and went. One summer I remember we wore little black straw hats; another season the hats were broad brimmed and, like the Englishman's monocle, were tied to the coat lapel with a long, dangling, black cord. One year we appeared in long-tailed coats; in another, rolled collars were in style, followed the next by red shoe strings. As just indicated, the year we started the Sunday school in our schoolhouse, seersuckers came in. And so each year there was something new under the sun.

By no means would I have the reader infer from what I have said about long sermons and forgotten Sunday school lessons that the religious atmosphere in which I was brought up was without influence on my own religious development. The sermon may have been unattractive, but the preacher was usually a man of deep piety, strict personal honesty, and of the highest moral integrity. Mennonites everywhere were known not only for their deep religious devotion, but their high moral standards as well. My own home was one in which religion functioned as a vital force for righteousness. My father was known among all his associates as a man of good judgment, with the highest sense of justice and fair dealing. He was often called on by his neighbors and friends of the community to arbitrate their differences. He, seemingly, was able to live peaceably with men against whom the whole community had turned its back. Tom West, the cattle buyer, was regarded by everybody as the meanest man in the township. He beat his wife, abused his livestock, quarreled with all his neighbors, often got drunk, and swore like a trooper. We boys always passed his house with a sense of awe as the home of the man who, in a fit of anger, had nearly killed his boy one time with a cattle whip. Nobody, seemingly, was able to get along with him. He, undoubtedly, was a tough customer and deserved his unsavory reputation. But with my father, with whom he had occasional business dealings, he never had the least difficulty. John Miller quarreled with all his neighbors except my father, with whom he was always on the best of terms. We boys were always taught that if we were good neighbors ourselves we would never have any difficulty with others. A religious spirit, we were told, should control all our activities, social and business, as well as spiritual. Church membership, consequently, was taken for granted among the Mennonite young people. I do not know of a single exception among all my boy acquaintances who did not sooner or later join the church, usually in his fifteenth or sixteenth year.

Nor was membership a mere matter of form. It was just as much a question of conviction with us as it was with those who may have been swept into the church on a wave of emotionalism set going by a series of revivals. Mennonites did not believe in protracted meetings. We arrived at our convictions through a gradual period of education in the home and church, and through our own growing consciences. In both cases convictions were real, though arrived at by different roads.

My own religious experiences were those of a normal boy living in a normal Christian community where everybody went to church. There were no religious crises in my boy life, but a series of definite impressions and convictions that gradually led straight toward church membership.

My religious faith like that of most boys, I think, was built upon what psychologists would call a pain economy. I remember one day, at the age of about twelve, I made a strong resolve to be more considerate of the wishes of my father and mother in the future because, in an attempt to improve my manners, Aunt Lena had said that the Bible promised a long life to the boys who honored their parents. To my consternation I discovered, in looking up the passage, that she had told the truth. A little later I was troubled in spirit for a number of days for calling Joe a fool, when I was shown the verse in the Book which relegated such as were guilty of this crime to certain eternal condemnation. Fear of hell fire was one of the potent forces that kept us from straying far afield from the straight and narrow way. To escape this terrible fate most of us joined church. This conviction came to fruition usually in the middle adolescent period; and so at the age of fifteen I decided with Pete and Ben and a number of other boy acquaintances of about the same age to "follow church" as we called the six-months period of religious instruction preparatory to baptism.

My father's congregation in Roanoke township was even more conservative in its religious practices than was Black Partridge. A group of ultra conservatives living in the northwestern corner of the settlement, under the leadership of old man Pete Kennel and his son "Johnie," were especially insistent on maintaining to the letter all the century-old customs and traditions of the Amish Mennonites.

Old Pete Kennel was an interesting character. He was one of the pioneer settlers of Linn township, having located there soon after the Civil War, when farms could still be bought from the original homesteaders at a price far below the value of a single good wheat crop. He was an industrious man with few wants. Everything he made he saved. As a result, he became perhaps the largest landholder in the whole county, possessing at one time several thousand acres of the blackest loam in central Illinois.

The fact that old Pete was the richest man in the county would never have been surmised from outward appearances. His clothes were shabby and ill fitting, usually homemade, and he wore hooks and eyes. His hair was white, worn long, and usually uncombed. His horses were as unkempt as himself and his carriage as dilapidated. The old canopy top buggy in which he and his family came to church was evidently kept out in the open under the willows most of the time, for the top, wheels, and even the seats showed plenty of signs of having stood under the hen roost during the week.

Kennel was a kindhearted old soul, however, and just and honest in all his business relations. His numerous tenants held him in the highest esteem. It was his boast that long after higher rents prevailed he never took more than the third from any of his renters. His wife was a fitting helpmate, as honest and generous, but also as careless of her personal appearance as he.

This old couple were occasional visitors at our home. Both were inveterate talkers; but Pete could more than hold his own. He specialized in two subjects—land and religion. In matters of religion he was ultraconservative. He would reincarnate all the old traditions to the letter—hooks and eyes, barn-door britches, beards, and everything. Hooks and eyes were to be a "Kenzeiche" of one's religious faith, an identification tag to one's brethren as one of the order. He was much concerned about the Christian's "Tracht." Of special significance was the "Meidung," or ostracism of an expelled member from all social as well as religious relations with his former fellow members. All these terms, of course, are pure Greek to the coming generation of Mennonites, but full of significance to the one just past.

The old man's protests, however, would not have gone far beyond the talk stage had it not been for his son, for he was a pious old soul, really quite generous and tolerant toward his fellows. His tender conscience would likely have been satisfied with mere vocal utterance of his disapproval of the changing order.

But not so his son Johnie. The younger man demanded visible evidence of reform. At first my father, taking the advice of the Apostle Paul not to eat meat if meat was an offense to his brother, was inclined to humor his tender-minded parishioner. At the latter's request, he exchanged the derby hat he had been wearing for the broad brim, more becoming to the humble calling of a Mennonite minister. He even allowed himself to be talked out of his necktie. But when Johnie demanded hooks and eyes, my father thought it time to call a halt. Although this self-appointed guardian of church standards continued with increasing insistence to demand a return to the old order for some years, he made himself such a nuisance to the great body of his fellow members that he finally worked himself completely out of the church. But not until he had taken with him the whole Kennel relationship.

About this time, in the late eighties, there appeared throughout the Amish congregations of central Illinois an unusual visitor in the form of a "sleeping" preacher. This man, as the title suggests, was an Amish layman by the name of Kauffman, from Elkhart County, Indiana, who had developed the knack of preaching while apparently asleep or in a trance. In the incipient stages of his preaching career Kauffman spoke only at occasional intervals in his home, but as his malady grew he spoke more frequently until finally the mere presence of an expectant audience was sufficient to cast the spell of suggestion upon him at any time. At the time of his first visit to Illinois he preached in the church houses every night to large audiences.

He was taken to the church house some time before six o'clock, at which time he fell asleep. This sleep soon developed into a sort of trance from which it was impossible to wake him. By seven he began to speak. When helped to his feet by attendants he was able to stand and to walk back and forth across the platform without much evident danger of falling or stepping off. For two or three hours he preached most eloquently, though somewhat incoherently after the manner of the Amish exhortations of that day. The discourse usually consisted of a strong appeal to his hearers to seek diligently after the heavenly mansions, to eschew the vain baubles of this world, and especially to live together in peace and harmony as becomes brethren in the faith. Sometimes the doctrines peculiar to the Amish were stressed, especially that of "Meidung." The speaker always began his discourse in German, but later in the evening switched over to English. The entire procedure followed the order of services common to the Amish at that time, beginning with a short introduction, followed by an opening prayer during which the preacher was always helped to his knees and up again by his attendants. Then followed the main sermon, lasting for several hours, and ending with a closing prayer, which always included the Lord's Prayer.

During all this time, from beginning to end, the preacher kept up a continual flow of eloquence, interrupted only once or twice during the evening by a sudden pause when his body stiffened, and with his right arm rigidly extended he muttered several incoherent phrases which sounded something like "metrellema wallasea, metrellema" and which his wife, who always accompanied him on these excursions, had discovered quite early in his preaching career was a demand for a drink of water. After an attendant had put a cup to his lips he proceeded with his discourse.

The coming of this strange sleeping preacher, it is needless to say, aroused great interest and not a little excitement among the Illinois Mennonites. Immense throngs filled the meetinghouses every night to hear him. For a time all marveled at what they regarded as a special manifestation of divine providence among them. But after the novelty had worn off somewhat, people began to differ in their estimate of the man. Some ventured the opinion that there was nothing unnatural about such appearances. The family doctors said everything could be explained by natural causes. Others discounted the preacher because he was not a regularly ordained minister, never having been chosen by lot, the Lord's favorite method of choosing His servants among the Amish.

A small group in every congregation, however, especially the Kennels in the Roanoke settlement, were thoroughly convinced that this unusual preaching gift was not the result of a physical or mental affliction, but a special endowment from heaven. The fact that the preacher frequently indulged in prophecy and occasionally seemed to hit upon a lucky coincidence by means of a happy guess, greatly strengthened this conviction among a small group. He also claimed the gift of seeing into the spirit world where he could read the character of many of his hearers. He frequently beheld streaks of light extending from the audience room to the portals of heaven, and streaks of dark to the gates of hell, the light and dark streaks supposedly representing respectively the just and unjust among his listeners. There was always an increasing sense of uneasiness among the more credulous when the dark streaks were particularly numerous—all of which enhanced the preacher's prestige among his devoted followers.

But my father had little faith in this sleeping prodigy. The whole phenomenon could be explained by natural causes and was the result of autosuggestion, he said, though he never used that term, never having studied psychology. The theory that the gift was catching was born out by the discovery that some years before an earlier sleeping preacher by the name of Troyer, from Iowa, had visited Kauffman's community; from whom the latter had seemingly borrowed both his "streaks" and his "metrellema." Incipient sleeping preachers also sprang up in the wake of Kauffman's itinerary in Illinois, though fortunately none of these developed beyond the budding stage.

Another reason for my father's lukewarmness toward this strange visitor was the rumor that he was a steady drinker and that occasionally he imbibed a trifle more than was befitting to a man of his holy pretensions. Kauffman's friends did not deny that he used liquor, but justified the practice on the ground that he did so for his stomach's sake on the recommendation of his family physician as well as the authority of the Apostle Paul. Soon after this, however, the sleeping preacher's influence waned. Although he was repeatedly brought back for a number of years by his devoted followers, the church houses were finally closed to him. The meetings had to be held in the private homes of his devotees. A number of his friends under the leadership of the Kennels ultimately withdrew from my father's church and moved to Shelby County, Illinois, where they set up a new congregation and finally installed their favorite night preacher as a regularly ordained day preacher as well.

Saloons were still common in central Illinois at this time, and even among the Amish there was not much prohibition sentiment. Among the more thoroughly Americanized Pennsylvania Mennonites at Sterling and Freeport there was a strong anti-saloon feeling; but the Alsatian Amish had not been in the country long enough to be entirely weaned from the established customs of their fatherland. My father was the first Amish preacher in the state to openly denounce the saloon from the pulpit. More than once he was warned by certain of his parishioners as well as by several of his fellow ministers to preach the gospel, and leave such nonreligious questions as the saloon to the individual conscience. Soon after his entrance into the ministry he decided to become a good example in the matter of at least two evil practices then common among his members—drinking and the use of tobacco. By precept and example he taught his own boys and the young men of his congregation the evil results of these twin vices. It was due to his influence that I never formed the habit of frequenting saloons, as did some of my boy acquaintances; and so I never developed a taste for liquor. It was never a temptation for me to pass a saloon door. This is, after all, the great hope of the present prohibition law. You cannot make men good by law; but the taste for liquor is an acquired taste. Millions of young men are growing up who have never seen a saloon and have never tasted strong drink. It is this generation, when it grows up, to whom the task of making the nation dry, in fact as well as in theory, must be entrusted.

As for the smoking habit I cannot say as much. A decent regard for the truth compels me to admit that neither my father's precept nor example carried so much weight with me as it should have done in the matter of the use of tobacco. I occasionally indulged in the use of the weed; but I was never quite happy in it. My stomach somehow abhorred the flavor of tobacco; and so I finally gave up the attempt to smoke. Whatever virtues I may claim for my habits, therefore, are not the result of any superior moral strength on my part. One is due to the example of a wise father; the other to the protest of a rebellious stomach.

Enough has already been said in this chapter about the unusual religious practices and social conventions of the Illinois Amish of forty years ago to convince the reader that they perhaps were entitled to the distinction of a "peculiar" people in the eyes of their fellow citizens. Religious affiliation with other denominations there was practically none, and social intercourse very little. I was keenly aware of these distinctions as a boy and was frequently embarrassed by them. No one, and least of all a boy of sixteen, cares to be ridiculed by his associates. The unusual dress regulations imposed on the girls, the big ungainly, homemade bonnets and prayer caps, the ceremony of footwashing practiced at Communion, the custom among the preachers of greeting one another with a kiss when they met in church or on the streets—a custom partly German and partly religious, an uneducated farmer ministry, the German services in an English environment—all these religious practices so different from those of other religious groups I felt sure marked us as a queer people among our non-Mennonite neighbors and friends.

The fact that the Amish were the wealthiest and most highly respected farmers in all that region seemingly did not in the slightest degree lessen my sensitiveness on this point. Like most boys I was more impressed by superficial peculiarities than by fundamental virtues. Whether the other boys of my set, who perhaps had less contact with the outside world in both school and books than I, shared my feeling, I do not know. But I felt it keenly, especially after I entered high school, thus enlarging my circle of boy and girl friends who were not of my church associates. This apologetic feeling for my church and people was deepened by the realization of the small role the denomination played in the big affairs of the world, especially as compared with other church groups. No Amish-Mennonite had ever been president. I never found the name in our school texts. Hardly ever were they mentioned in the big metropolitan dailies, and seldom even in our local papers. They must be an inferior people, I thought, and perhaps with less rights than other people. We were just a plain, honest farmer folk, sincere, industrious, and God-fearing, but not much else. The choice places in this world were not for us. This was the opinion of ourselves as to our worldly station, though to some of us in matters of the spirit we were God's elect.

All this was unfortunate. To succeed in life one needs a wholesome respect for himself and all his affiliations. I think I developed an inferiority complex as a result of these boyhood impressions from which I never recovered. Often in later life, in times of special opportunities, I hesitated to assume responsibilities which others with perhaps poorer intellectual and spiritual equipment but a more exalted opinion of their place in the sun seized and carried through to success.

10

Joys of a Country Teacher

I WENT BACK to farm work the season after my last year in high school with less regret than usual. Not that stumbling over rough clods behind a dusty harrow all day long in the face of a raw March wind or following a corn cultivator under a hot July sun was any less disagreeable than it had been before, but this was to be my last spring of farm drudgery. Beginning with the coming fall I would exchange dirty clothes, salty, sweaty horses, the manure fork, and milk pail for clean hands, books, and a daily occupation which, seemingly, promised nothing but a most agreeable diversion. In anticipation of coming delights I forgot my present uncomfortable tasks.

The memories of my late high school days, too, so suggestive of congenial companionships and interesting studies, lingered with me all through the spring and summer months. The mere sight of the tall water tower three miles to the west, which marked the place where the village high school stood, was enough to bring forth a whole train of haunting memories. And so, between pleasant anticipations and happy memories, my mind had little time for vain regrets and little room for other diversions except, perhaps, to watch occasionally the shadows of swiftly moving clouds as they chased one another like greyhounds across the rolling fields or the progress of a growing whirlwind of dust like a miniature cyclone as it picked up the dust, cornstalks, or anything else lying loose within its path in the freshly plowed field, and carried it high into the air in ever widening circles until it disappeared from sight. Even the songs of the meadow lark from the nearby pasture and of the song sparrow from the hedgerows seemed a little sweeter because they were in the nature of farewell music.

Being now nearly full-grown, I was expected to take a full hand in all farm operations. In haymaking I took my place for the first time in front of our new Keystone hay loader which elevated whole windrows of brittle clover or long, tangled timothy faster than two full-sized men could dispose of it on the hay wagon. For the first time, too, the haying season had lost a bit of its poetry for me.

The oats crop this year was exceptionally heavy; but, unfortunately, a week before harvest time a wind storm had laid low nearly the entire crop so that it had to be cut "one way." This nearly doubled the usual length of the harvest period, since the binder had to be driven empty half of the time. At such times the task of the shockers became unusually heavy. The bundle carrier was disengaged from the binder, and the long, tangled, loosely bound or often unbound bundles had to be brought together in heaps by hand. But even this had its compensations. The shockers worked in pairs, and I was fortunate in pairing most of the time with cousin George who served as our hired hand that year. George was a little older than I, but we had much in common in our ambitions and our life interests. Even though he had not been able to realize as many of his school ambitions as I, we found great satisfaction in the course of our work together in the fields in talking about matters of peculiar interest to ourselves—school, travel, books, and even airships. When George and I shocked together, the days were always short.

In thrashing time, too, I was now given a man's job—that of hauling bundles from the field, not a particularly hard task, but for some reason not to my liking, perhaps because the bundle hauler was the first man out and often the last one in.

My school opened the first Monday in September. Seemingly I was not unduly impressed with my new work; for, try as I may, I can recover only a few details of the routine of those early apprenticeship days as a wielder of the birch. They were spent, no doubt, in organizing my little band of fifteen or twenty reluctant searchers after the truth into their respective classes according to the readers they brought with them the first day; and in drilling them in the rudiments of the curriculum then in vogue—the three R's with a little geography and perhaps some formal language lessons added for older children. History and physiology were reserved for the big boys and girls who would come later in the fall or winter months.

Although the details have eluded my memory, I do have a dim recollection of the general sense of satisfaction I had in the dignity of my work, the pride in my calling, tempered somewhat, however, by a growing feeling of protest against the irksomeness of the day's round of petty details and against the constant rigid and relentless demands on my time and attention. A country school teacher, I found, had no time for napping during school hours. His young tormentors, or victims, however you may regard them, saw to it that there was little chance for his mind to grow stale through disuse. To keep even twenty lusty, untutored young savages constantly busy at their appointed tasks in a school prison, while a thousand allurements beckoned them outside; to maintain a proper schoolroom decorum, and at the same time make the most of a ten-minute recitation period—all these exacting duties taxed the young and inexperienced teacher's patience and mental and spiritual resources to the uttermost, and were particularly trying to one who delighted in giving his mind more or less free play to wander off into daydreams rather than to pin it down to the performance of an endless succession of irritating and inescapable tasks. More than once as I looked out of the open windows during those long, hazy, and dreamy September afternoons, watching some carefree plowboy seated on his riding plow as he drove his team across the field with nothing on his mind apparently but the easy task of guiding his horses around the proper corner at the end of the furrow, I wondered whether after all I had not made a mistake in exchanging the plow for the birch rod.

The best part of the day for both teacher and pupil was the four o'clock hour after school. How quiet and pleasant and vacant the old schoolroom seemed then; and how welcome the release from the strain and petty responsibilities of a crowded school day! It was in such an atmosphere as this that I delighted most to read some favorite book or indulge in the anticipation of some pleasant adventure. It was during these first weeks that I read my first treatise on school teaching—a pedagogical story called the *Evolution of Dodd,* written by William Hawley Smith, an ex-teacher, a graduate of the state Normal, and a lecturer, living in Peoria. Both the book and the author were well known among the teachers of central Illinois at that time. Smith's main contribution to pedagogical science was the contention that some boys and girls are "born short" along certain lines, and no amount of education will be able to develop talents that the child does not possess. The teacher's business, he said, was to discover first the child's particular bent and then cultivate that, rather than force it to study what it had neither adaptability for nor interest in—a principle, perhaps, not so well understood then as now. I heard Smith on the lecture platform several times some years afterward. My most vivid recollection of him is the fact that he was the homeliest man I had ever seen, a quality he was as well aware of as his audiences, and which he frequently exploited in his well-known lecture on "The Advantages of Being Homely."

I drove back and forth to school every day during the fall months. The schoolhouse was located several miles off the main road and to me the leisurely drive home each late afternoon along the unfrequented side roads, during the pleasant September and October days, keenly sensitive to the familiar barnyard sounds and smells that came to me through the quiet evening air from the farm homes I passed, was always one of the anticipatory delights that compensated for many of the annoyances of a busy day.

The two days that stand out most distinctly now in my recollections of that first month as a teacher are the time the county superintendent made his first visit and the Saturday I drew my first month's salary. The county superintendent of schools was an elective official in Illinois at this time; and consequently, like other county officials, he owed his election more to his political affiliations than to any particular qualifications for his office. That is perhaps the reason why Lyon Karr, a good Democrat, a fluent speaker, and a good mixer, held the responsible position as head of the rural school system in Woodford County. Educational qualifications he undoubtedly possessed to an eminent degree, being a graduate of the state normal school, but, according to current reports at the time, he hardly measured up to the moral standards then expected of rural school teachers of the county and the state. He chewed tobacco, he smoked, he swore when hard pressed, and being a Democrat, he drank whiskey occasionally; and he was not a church member. In fact, he did most of the things a schoolteacher was not supposed to do.

Personally, however, I had much reason from other than purely professional motives to feel kindly toward Lyon Karr. He had taken an interest in me as a pupil in District Number Six. He once offered to use his influence in getting an appointment to West Point if my father would permit it, which likely he would not; he had granted me my certificate of graduation from the rural schools; and he gave me my first teacher's license. So I had reasons enough to covet the approbation of the county superintendent on the occasion of his first visit to my school. I never knew what he thought of my feeble efforts; but he was gracious enough to commend me for a few good points in my teaching, and by so doing encouraged me to go on at a time when discouragement might have turned me forever against the profession. For this he has my eternal gratitude, even though he did raise his feet to the top of my desk, and bespatter the stove door with tobacco juice that was meant for the coal bucket.

My first pay day is the only one I remember. The pay checks were drawn on a bank in the village of Washburn, some four or five miles north of my school, and some nine or ten from my home as the crow flies—that is, along the C & A Railroad track. It took me a whole blissful Saturday to get my first forty-dollar check turned into cash. Not being able to get a farm horse to make the trip on this day, I decided to go by train. There were two daily trains between Metamora and Washburn—one going north to Chicago about eight o'clock in the morning, and the other, an accommodation train, returning some time late in the afternoon.

I arrived at my destination before nine o'clock, and soon had my check cashed. Having no other business in the village, and not desirous of waiting a whole day for the afternoon train, I decided to walk back. Buying five cents worth of bologna from the local butcher shop, and an equal amount of crackers from the grocery, I started back on my ten-mile trip along the railway track with the forty dollars safely tucked away in my coat pocket, the largest amount of money I had ever earned or carried at any one time. Of course, it would not have been necessary to take a whole Saturday and a ten-mile walk to get my salary check cashed. The bank undoubtedly would have honored my check by mail. But I did not know that then; and anyway, I doubt whether I would have trusted the United States mail with the first precious forty dollars I had ever earned.

Since I was still several years under legal age, and my absence from the farm necessitated the securing of a hired man, I turned most of my earnings over to my father, who generously permitted me, however, to keep a liberal allowance for clothes and such other personal expenses as were now made necessary by my new duties as a schoolmaster. I was my own boss now so far as my own spending money was concerned. Although not a spendthrift, I spent money much more freely than ever before, in the interests of my personal appearance, both because I felt that my added importance in the community justified it, and because I was no longer under the necessity of asking my father's advice on the cost of my wardrobe and charging all my purchases to him at the local store. The fact that I had just turned seventeen and wanted to look like twenty-one, no doubt, had something to do with my ambitions.

I was able now for the first time to realize an ambition that had been forming in my mind for several years—to appear as well dressed and as neatly barbered as some of the fastidious town boys I had associated with in high school. For a year or two I had been my own barber. But now one Saturday afternoon, soon after receiving my first salary check, I entered Jim Frantz's barber shop, bent on taking everything he had in the way of service no matter what the cost, not only a haircut with the clippers, but a shave as well, and all the other extras which up to this time had been prohibitive because of the price—shampoo, hairsinge, and massage. Of course I wouldn't always be so extravagant, but I could try it once at least.

As the barber applied the shampoo I noticed the label, "Florida Water," on the bottle containing the liquid. Why not get a bottle of this hair beautifier myself, I thought. It certainly would be cheaper than to have the barber apply it every time; he likely would charge me at least ten cents for each application. Without arousing Jim's curiosity too much, I carefully examined the label in plain sight on the shelf before me. A few days later I bought a bottle of the preparation at Pelz's drug store. That evening, soon after supper, I found my way to my room upstairs earlier than usual, anxious to try out my new magic hair tonic. But for some unexplainable reason the nice white lather which had responded so readily to the magic touch of the barber's fingers refused to materialize. I used up nearly half of the contents of the bottle before I gave up in despair, wondering why I could not get the required results. It was not until some time later that I discovered that "Florida Water" was the name of a perfume and not a hair shampoo; and that Jim Frantz had evidently merely used an empty perfume bottle as a container for his homemade shampoo preparation.

I think it was about this time, too, that I bought my first tailor-made suit of clothes—that is, our local merchant, Joe Conrad, took my measure and sent to Born and Company of Chicago for a suit "made to order." The wardrobe of the average country boy in my day was not elaborate. He usually had one "Sunday suit" which did faithful service summer and winter until worn out, selected for wearing qualities rather than beauty and frequently lasting for several years. But now I was determined, since I made my own choice, to go in strictly for style. Frock coats must have been the fashion for young men that season, though perhaps not for boys; for that was the style I selected from the fashion plate in Conrad's store. It was a long tail, low cut, single button affair, more like a modern evening dress coat than one for ordinary wear; and I am not quite sure even today which it was meant to be.

Instead of paper collars at fifteen cents a box, I now wore linen collars which had to be sent to the Troy Laundry at Peoria to be washed; I also bought my first pair of kid gloves, a fedora hat, and patent-leather shoes. I was dressed up "fit to kill" by this time, ready to have my first pictures taken, just to see how I looked, evidently, for I ordered only two of them finished, one of which I gave to my sister, and the other to a cousin, not keeping one for myself. These purchases, it is needless to say, made heavy inroads into my first month's salary. My father's residue this month, as I remember it now, was rather meager.

I may as well complete the list of my youthful vanities at this point. Parting the hair in the middle was a boyish affectation that had caught several victims in our town, myself included. I was the only boy in our family whom my parents had forgotten to provide with a middle name, just why I never found out. "Henry Smith" always seemed very commonplace and unattractive, and no doubt it was all it seemed. What my parents overlooked I had decided in my last year in high school to supply. I did not care for a whole name, a mere initial would do. I chose the letter C, but instead of placing it in the middle, I inserted it at the beginning of my name. C. Henry Smith looked rather pleasing and distinguished, something like E. Benjamin Andrews, who at that time was president of a famous university and author of a popular United States history. In fact, both parting the hair in the middle and adding an initial before one's name were somewhat of a fad among young people just at this time; and I had plenty of good company in adopting both. This one-sided name of mine got me into occasional difficulty later on. University registrars and officials in charge of public records do not recognize mere initials; they want all the names you have. When full names are not forthcoming they sometimes supply the deficiency to their own satisfaction. I think my "C" was transformed into a half dozen different names. I finally tried to drop it entirely, but it had gotten itself inserted into too many official records to be disentangled, and I might easily have been mistaken for one of several persons. I finally gave up in despair and have used it consistently ever since.

After corn husking several of the big boys and girls of the district entered school. With the introduction of history and advanced geography my academic work became a trifle more interesting, although the brevity of the short recitation period made it well nigh impossible to arouse interest in any subject, no matter how fascinating. I induced two of my older pupils to take a course after school hours in physical geography, not in the regular curriculum, when we spent the better part of a whole hour instead of the usual ten minutes in our study. I enjoyed this period above everything else during the day; and I think my pupils did so, too. In fact, their interest was not long confined to physical geography. In their walks home together after school hours, they began to take an interest in each other that soon developed into a romance which in the course of a few years ripened into a happy marriage.

The most interesting school subjects to me during this time were history and geography. My preference for these two subjects was due to the reading of two pedagogical works on special methods written by Dr. Charles McMurray of the state normal school. Dr. McMurray was the leading exponent in America at this time of what was known as the Herbartian school of pedagogy, which made the enlistment of the child's interest the chief objective in all pedagogical endeavor. The detailed application of the general Herbartian principles to special topics was most thoroughly worked out by Dr. McMurray in the two above-named subjects. Much stress was laid in these books on the principle of proceeding from the known to the unknown. Geography was introduced with a study of the home creek, local industries, a neighboring hill, and the home town. All these studies furnished the child with the necessary terminology and the geographical concepts with which to interpret the larger world beyond his immediate horizon, when more formal geography would be taken up later on. Following the same principle, a number of type studies were introduced in which a detailed study was made of certain geographic features a little farther removed from the child's immediate observation, such as a river system, a mountain, the prairie, a coal mine, or perhaps a large city. Each of these subjects was studied in great detail; and when completed the child had a key to the understanding of any river, mountain, or city.

History was approached by the same method and consisted in the early years largely of disconnected stories, concretely told, of pioneer life either in nearby communities or faraway states. Usually included in the series were stories of the early settlers along the Atlantic seaboard; and for the children of Illinois, the adventures of the explorers of the Mississippi Valley. Two types worked out in some detail in the book mentioned were LaSalle's first voyage down the Illinois River and George Rogers Clark's conquest of the Northwest Territory during the American Revolution.

Another principle strongly emphasized by Dr. McMurray was correlation of studies. History, literature, and geography, especially, went well together, since the first and second always had to have some local habitation. The Illinois River and its surrounding territory were studied from an imaginary boat starting at Chicago, passing through the drainage canal, stopping at Joliet to visit the state penitentiary and at Starved Rock to see where LaSalle once encamped, and all other places of historic, scenic, or literary interest, studying the bluffs, the agricultural resources of the valley, the river commerce and transportation system, passing under the big Eads Bridge and finally landing at St. Louis.

Whatever else might be said of the merits of this method of study, it had the virtue of being interesting to both teacher and pupil. It succeeded in making the subject matter a living reality rather than a series of unrelated facts to be committed to memory. The Illinois River was more than a blue streak across the map of Illinois; and the story of LaSalle was not only so many pages in the history book, but an actual trip made long ago by a real man over the very ground with which some of us were well acquainted.

After the first of March the older boys and girls returned to their farm work, and the educational program settled back again into a daily routine of hearing recitations in the elements of the three R's. With the coming of the lazy spring days and the return of the meadow lark's song, the duties of the schoolroom became increasingly irksome. The final appearance of the "last day" was as welcome to the teacher as to the pupils.

Not being needed on the farm this summer, I convinced my father that I ought to attend school somewhere in further preparation for my work. This he consented to the more readily when I proposed to enter a new institution founded by a Mennonite in Elkhart, Indiana, the home of the Mennonite Publishing Company, publisher of our religious journal, the *Herald of Truth,* and the home also of evangelist Coffman, spoken of elsewhere. The name of this school was the Elkhart Institute. I knew very little about the institution except what I had seen in the circulars sent me. According to these circulars there were a dozen or more members on the faculty; the courses were "eminently practical" and the tuition "surprisingly reasonable." I wrote the secretary that I was coming and was assured in turn that I would be met by a representative of the institute upon my arrival.

Leaving home one morning early in May, I arrived at Elkhart on the evening of the same day. The man who met me at the station said his name was Schmidt, a name I recognized as that of one of the faculty members listed in the circular. My first impression of the representative of the school was disappointing. I had never met a college professor before, but I had imagined him to be a person of superior appearance as well as of intellect. "Professor" Schmidt was a small, insignificant-looking man, with thin curly hair; and he spoke with the accent of a Buck's County Dutchman. To an older and more experienced observer, of course, the "professor's" appearance should not have counted against him; I have since found out that brains and good looks are not necessarily twin qualities and have met many college professors who looked the part much less than did my friend Schmidt that evening; but this being my first contact with the species I could not be blamed for my lack of discrimination. Professor Schmidt, I found out, was also the manager of the rooming house which was to be my home for the next three months. This building I found to be a small story and a half structure, rented from the president of the publishing house and situated on a back alley, with a fancy name, Jaurette Court.

The small rooms were all crowded with occupants—three or four young men who worked in the local publishing house, and several students from out of town—all about my own age. I was introduced to my roommate, a deaf and dumb paper cutter from the local tablet factory. There were also two girl students who, although they did not room in the house, earned their meals as cooks of the boarding club. These girls were not always dependable. Often they came late and occasionally not at all in the morning, when we had to prepare our own breakfast. But that was a simple matter; for, like most college boarding halls, this one in particular did not believe in overfeeding the boarders.

Professor Schmidt had spent several terms at a private normal school at Ada, Ohio, where cheapness both of living expenses and cost of instruction was the chief inducement held out to prospective students. It was here, no doubt, that our boarding hall manager learned the secret of high thinking with plain living; for whatever else might be said about his board, the rates, like those of the tuition, were "surprisingly reasonable," less than two dollars per week. But while the rate was reasonable, the quantity of food was as surprisingly scant, especially to a country boy who was hardly beyond his growing stage and to whom breakfast, dinner, and supper were not terms denoting amount of food consumed, but merely the time of day when it was served. We knew nothing of light meals on the farm; all were heavy.

My first breakfast at the new boarding hall included an apple, a few pieces of bread, a glass of water, and a new preparation that looked a little like sawdust and tasted not much different, but which they called a breakfast food, said to be especially good for brain workers. It was a predecessor of the Battle Creek varieties, concocted and locally manufactured by an employee of the publishing house, who was experimenting at this time with several schemes for making a quick fortune. He was testing out his preparation on the brain workers of our club, and for that reason was selling it to our manager at a reduced rate. The experiment was not a success, and the promoter soon discontinued it, too soon, perhaps. Had he continued a while longer he might have found the fortune which fell to the Battle Creek concern a little later for a preparation no better than the one to which we were subjected that summer.

This breakfast food I thought was merely an "appetizer," a forerunner of the real breakfast, and so when I had finished I brushed aside the empty dish, expecting the waiters, who were also the cooks, to bring on the real breakfast of ham and eggs, potatoes and coffee, and maybe pancakes, such as I had been accustomed to on the farm. But nothing of the sort happened. It soon dawned on me that the meal was finished. I left the table surprised, hungry, and disgruntled.

Unfortunately, my first day in Elkhart fell on a Saturday, a school holiday. My first task after breakfast was to look up the school building, or buildings, and arrange for my work the coming week. Instead of buildings, I found that the offices, recitation rooms, and practically all that made up the Elkhart Institute were housed in a single, medium-sized, down-town, second-story room, rented from the local G. A. R. The principal was not in; but I met the secretary, who was also the owner, since this was a private school. He was H. A. Mumaw, a practicing physician who divided his time between prescribing pills and managing an educational enterprise and, like most men with divided interests, did neither well.

The next day, Sunday, was a cold, cloudy, disagreeable day. The night of May 11, 1894, the day I left home, will be remembered by the farmers of the middle west as the date of a killing frost, which did great damage to the early planted corn. For a week the freezing weather continued, making it uncomfortable in the houses from which the winter heating stoves had already been removed for the season. I attended the local Mennonite church in the morning, but being a stranger, I felt lonesome and uncomfortable. In the afternoon all the boys, even my deaf and dumb roommate, went out to visit their friends and associates elsewhere. I was left all alone in a cold, cheerless little rooming house. I was disappointed in school. If I confined myself to the food furnished by our boarding club, I likely would be hungry much of the time. I couldn't keep my thoughts from drifting back to my boy and girl friends whom I had left just two days before and who at this very minute were undoubtedly together at some country home, as was their custom on Sunday afternoons, doing full justice to a big country dinner or enjoying themselves to the full in social games out on the big front lawn. It was my first extended stay away from home, and I was clearly homesick.

I left my cheerless little house, sought out the Big Four railway track where it took a westerly course, and began to count railway ties. Not that I intended to walk back to Illinois, of course, but there was some relief in merely facing that direction for a few hours. In the course of my ramble I finally came to the long bridge which spans the Elkhart River on the north side of the city, where I sat down partly to rest, but more to indulge in a season of vain regrets for ever having left home. At this particular spot the river has a peculiar oily smell due largely to the refuse dumped into it from several factories located some distance upstream. There evidently must be a close connection between the nerve cells that control the sense of smell and the memory cells or whatever it is that recovers out of the subconscious mind the sensations and emotions of the past; for after this, even for years, a single whiff from that oily river was sufficient to overwhelm me with all the homesickness I felt that lonely Sunday afternoon, my first one away from home.

To be sure, this spell of disappointment wore off in course of time. I soon became accustomed to my surroundings. Even the board seemed to get better. The young people at the hall turned out to be an intelligent and congenial group. The practical jokes we played on one another only deepened the bonds of comradeship. I learned to know intimately a number of my schoolmates and soon found a boon companion in the person of a young Virginia music teacher, a little older than I, by the name of John Good, with whom I shared many a forbidden adventure in the course of the summer. The select list of talented young men and women from various parts of the country drawn to Elkhart by the Mennonite Publishing Company as printers, proofreaders, editors of the various publications, clerks, and other help made the congregation at Elkhart the most progressive at this time in the entire church and the social atmosphere among the young people most pleasant.

Why shouldn't a prairie country boy of eighteen enjoy himself in such surroundings! School duties that were light and pleasant, congenial companionship of boys and girls of his own age and kindred in spirit, the romantic St. Joe inviting to numerous boat rides and picnic parties, a string of lakes nearby where fishing was good, bicycle paths leading out of town in every direction, native patches of forest at frequent intervals along every roadside, band concerts, oratorios, lecture courses, literary societies—all these. What a contrast, so it seemed to me, to the hard dusty work in the cornfields under a hot July sun or following a thrashing gang on the flat, treeless, uninteresting prairies of Illinois. Northern Indiana has ever since seemed a land of romance to me.

For me, however, I am afraid that the summer was more pleasant than profitable. With the exception of a beginning course in Latin, a new subject to me, the only available courses offered in the curriculum were such as I had already had in high school. The institute was a private venture patterned after the private normal schools which flourished in the middle west during the eighties and nineties, of which perhaps the best known were Valparaiso, Indiana, and Ada, Ohio. These schools were commercial enterprises, poorly equipped, and designed for the benefit largely of elementary school teachers, though later they added numerous departments and called themselves universities. Their chief appeal to prospective students was the ability to produce quick results. My friend Schmidt, whom I found out later to be a product of Ada, had entered that school directly from a Canadian country school without any high school preparation, and after two years of work had secured a bachelor's degree, covering in this short time what I later had to take eight years for in the state system. To this day, I doubt not, he regards his degree the equal of mine. These schools, poor as they were, had a place in their day and, no doubt, made it possible for many boys and girls of limited means to launch out on an educational career who otherwise might never have gotten started. The coming of the state normal schools and departments of education in the colleges and universities with higher educational standards finally put this type of school out of commission. Most of them passed into history; a few transformed themselves into denominational colleges, but even these have never been able to quite outlive their earlier traditions of short-cut methods. This is the kind of school Dr. Mumaw had in mind when he promoted the Elkhart Institute. It was still in its initial stages the summer I attended. The curriculum was very meager and the teaching staff entirely inadequate.

While the principal was a full-time teacher imported from outside of Elkhart, the remainder of the dozen or so on the teaching staff, as advertised in the circulars, were part-time students like our boarding hall manager, or local ministers. The doctor even asked me to teach a class in geography after I had been in attendance for several weeks. This was too much for me. Realizing that I could learn very little here, I decided to leave before the regular term closed. I did not even take the examinations, doubting whether the credits would be accepted by other schools. And so, even though the doctor tried to make it easy for me to stay, I returned home with my work uncompleted, several weeks before the close of the summer term.

The open country seemed strange and lonely after my three-months stay in the city. I had left home in May when nature was at its very best, with the fields a rich, dark green, and the lilacs in bloom. I returned in mid August when the pastures were brown and dry and the oats in shock. The dark sultry summer nights especially seemed lonesome after the bright lights of the city. The painful silence of the night, intensified by the continuous chirping of the cricket and the lonely call of the katydid, harbinger of an early frost, and interrupted only by an occasional sigh from the region of the cow lot, seemed almost oppressive in contrast to the more joyful nocturnal sounds of the city so suggestive of human activity—the tolling of the bell on the switch engine in the nearby railroad yards, the clattering hoofs on the pavement on Main Street, and the sound of human voices and laughter everywhere. For several weeks after I returned I occasionally awoke in the depth of night half afraid of the intense darkness and the terrible stillness.

I taught again that fall. In fact, I continued my work in the country school for two more years, the last in my home district. I remember no outsanding educational events in these last two years as a rural teacher. I did my work conscientiously and I think fairly satisfactorily. But I was no more than an average success. I was too much of a student to be satisfied with the routine drilling demanded in elementary teaching. And so, after three years in the little white schoolhouse, in the year 1896, although I had contracted for the coming fall, I resigned and decided to continue my studies in college.

11

On the Farm But Not of It

ALTHOUGH I REMAINED on the farm during these years of teaching, I was not of it. I took very little part in the major farm operations. Viewing farm life from the angle of a visitor rather than of an actual participant, as one who could enjoy all of its delights without experiencing any of its drudgery, hay-making and thrashing, and even corn husking, when viewed from a safe distance, recovered again some of the charm with which my childhood fancies had clothed them.

The farmers during this period were passing through a time of severe economic distress. The panic of ninety-three, the most severe industrial depression since seventy-three, was the culmination of a long list of economic ills from which they did not recover for nearly another decade. Prices went down to rock bottom. Oats in Illinois sold for ten cents per bushel and corn for less than twenty. Hogs at one time brought only three cents per pound. To make matters worse, the low prices were accompanied in Illinois by a series of scant crops. The affected area was not large enough to raise the general price level, and so the farmers of this particular region not only received a low price for what they sold, but they had little to sell.

I was too young and carefree to be worried much by these conditions, but my father was not. He had just bought a farm from a neighbor at a good price, going into debt for a considerable part of it. Although we were never in danger of losing the farm, for years this debt was often an obstacle in the way of some household convenience my mother needed, or some additional farm equipment my father wanted. Often they said, "After we are out of debt we will get this or that." Unfortunately, that day never came for my mother.

In spite of the hard times of the middle nineties, the wheels of social progress were continually moving forward. Steady advance was being made in the discovery of new processes and the invention of new appliances that greatly increased the comforts and happiness of man, and broadened his social outlook and mental horizon. The farmer and the country boy shared these advantages with others. Country loneliness, especially, was rapidly disappearing. Although the telephone had been in use in the cities for years, up to this time it had never occurred to the farmer that it was meant for him as well as for his city cousin. He still called his thrashing hands and the family doctor on a swift horse, still made his visits to his relatives and friends unannounced, and invited himself to dinner unbidden. But finally one day it occurred to some farmer with a little more imagination than was possessed by his neighbors to connect his home with that of his friends and trading village on a telephone line. This telephone was found to be such a convenience to the men and such a comfort to the women that soon other houses were likewise connected. The mania for telephones spread like that later for Eskimo pie. Within two or three years every farm home in the Mississippi Valley was connected with some local telephone company. I remember that for several years, while the fever was at its height, "telephone" was the sole topic of conversation at the dinner table when we had company. Once installed, this easy means of communication proved such a necessity to the farmer that all wondered why someone had not thought of its benefits long ago. To the women, especially, this new method of social intercourse was a veritable godsend, lightening the exacting household duties with many an hour of long-distance gossip. To be sure, since these telephones were all on party lines, the listeners occasionally heard bits of news not meant for their ears.

These were still the horse and buggy days. For most people four or five miles was still the visiting radius. Ten miles was an extended journey; while a visit of fifteen or twenty miles to friends or relatives was an event long to be remembered. But for the young men the cruising radius was soon greatly extended by the coming of the "safety" bicycle. This safety was almost prohibitive for the average boy at first because of the high price. With the lowering of the price, however, and especially with the introduction of the pneumatic tire, the bicycle mania spread until nearly every boy in the community was the proud possessor of this rapid means of travel. Used bicycles, like used automobiles later, soon became the stock in trade of even the boy with the most meager income. I got my first wheel from our hired man in a trade for an old shotgun. We were no longer confined now in our social intercourse to our own immediate community. On Sunday afternoons, especially, we were often on our wheels visiting our friends and cousins some miles away; and frequently during a week end we rode to Hopedale or Flanagan, heretofore a prohibitive distance except by train, to visit the young people of other Mennonite communities.

The automobile had not yet made its appearance in the country districts; but the gas engine, which made the automobile possible, was just being introduced. The first one in our village was installed in the local grain elevator to replace the faithful old blind mare that for years had turned the horse-power that elevated the grain from the dump on the ground floor to the bins on the top floor of the tall building. The most familiar sounds that greeted the ears of the country boy as he came to town were the irregular explosions of the single-cylinder gas engine as he entered the village and the ringing blows of the blacksmith's hammer in the smithy just across from the public square.

I recall distinctly the pleasure as well as the amazement with which I listened for the first time to the most charming music through two long rubber tubes attached to a glass-covered mechanism which they called a phonograph, said to have been invented by Edison. There were a number of these in the waiting room of the Union Railway Station in Peoria. By winding the machine and dropping a nickel in a slot you could hear songs, orchestra, or funny speeches according to the announcements printed on a placard placed above each machine. It was not long until these phonographs were found in nearly every country home, first with rubber tubes, later with loud-speakers.

At Elkhart I had heard the science teacher explain one day the basic principles of the moving picture contrivance which was just beginning to be mentioned as a curiosity. I was surprised to learn how simple it was. This was still before the nickelodeon had made its appearance as a place of amusement on the streets of the larger cities.

During these transition years as I was passing out of the last stages of boyhood into budding manhood and drifting away from farm life into a larger sphere of life interests, I was also losing social contact with my boyhood friends and associates. Ben and Pete were now interested in horses, cattle, and the farm; and soon in getting married; I in books, school, and a future life in the city. None of my former associates cared for the things that seemed of greatest importance to me. Not more than one or two had ever finished a course in the country schools; none but Ben and John Camp. John proposed to start to college with me in the fall, but after one year of college experience he, too, dropped out and settled back to the life of a contented farmer.

Few of my relatives sympathized with me in my life ambitions. Some thought I was lazy; all were sure that I was foolish. Uncle Joe, especially, who thought of values largely in terms of dollars and cents, after finding out some years later that I was earning less money with all my college preparation than his Henry, who had quit country school as soon as he was able to hold a plow handle, once told me he hoped none of his children would ever waste their lives like that. Of course, I did not tell him that I left the farm not to make more money elsewhere but to live a more satisfactory life. He would not have understood. I believe Henry's sister expressed the family estimate of the value of an education when she said, "If I know enough to count my eggs and figure up the amount of my butter I have all the education I need. What more does anybody want?"

But while most of my uncles and aunts may have thought me foolish in wasting my time in an occupation that brought such meager financial returns, I think I retained their respect and affection through all these years. I deliberately set myself the task of avoiding any break in the ties of affection that bound me to my family and my relatives. Although the world of my chief interests was far removed from theirs, that did not prevent me from sharing with them our far more important family heritage and traditions. For years I never returned home from college or from teaching in the city without a visit with them. They were always glad to see me and especially pleased that I was not "stuck up" as college boys were supposed to be when they visited the folks back on the farm. On such occasions I simply stepped out of my world and lived with them in theirs, forgetting for the time being that I had ever been anything but an unsophisticated farm boy.

With Uncle John I argued the futility of waiting for the right sign of the moon to plant potatoes; with Uncle Pete, who remained a stanch Republican to the end, I talked politics, and to his delight usually agreed with him; while to Aunt Lena, who had taken up the collecting fad in her declining years, I would bring a rock or fossil from some strange place I had visited. This bit of recognition of her pet hobby on my part always gave her great pleasure, even though the contribution may have been nothing but an ordinary pebble picked up from a creek bed in a neighboring state. These visits I continued for years, until one after the other had all silently passed into that better land where neither wise nor foolish, high nor low are known. It has always been a matter of sweet satisfaction to me that I was able to keep alive this spirit of comradeship and fellowship to the end with the brothers and sisters of my father and mother.

But to return to my boy and girl associates of the middle nineties. Although I was drifting out of their circle of immediate life interests, I must confess that I was not altogether unappreciative of the play life then current in the countryside. Practically all of my young associates being members of the various Mennonite congregations of the community, our whole social outlook was more or less tinged with a religious atmosphere and shadowed by the constant fear of transgressing the narrow boundaries set by church traditions. A wave of puritanical censorship, first sponsored by certain Indiana Mennonite evangelists, was spreading through the Illinois congregations at this time, radically transforming the whole recreational life of the young people. The old "floor" games, especially, which went by the name of "frolics," under censure of the church authorities as the devil's most alluring means of enticing the young people from the straight and narrow way, were passing. Instead, less worldly forms of amusements were suggested, such as ice cream socials, and singings where the new songs "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder" and "Blessed Sunshine" were beginning to replace the old favorites, "Bringing in the Sheaves" and "There Is a Fountain." These singings usually ended, however, in a resurrection of such childhood favorites as "Drop the Handkerchief" and "Three Deep." But what mattered the name; whether you held your best girl by the hand as you sashayed back and forth across the barn floor or showed your preference for her out on the front lawn by dropping a handkerchief by her side in your run around the circle and, on pretense of winning the race for the place you forced her to vacate, you held her in your arms for one blissful second, it mattered little—the thrill was the same.

Those of us, however, who were not so easily reconciled to the passing of the old order stole away occasionally on a Saturday afternoon to Flanagan or Hopedale where Indiana puritanism had not yet cast its gloom, and where the old folks had not yet forgotten their youth. And here, on the cleanly swept barn floors in the summertime, or the big dining room cleared of chairs and tables in winter, we "skipped to m'Lou" and "popped the weasel," or refused the "Weavily wheat, to bake a cake for Charley," until the small hours of the morning, to the charming strains of a mouth organ, also called a French harp.

Of all the musical instruments ever invented by man, no other is so expressive and suggestive of rustic simplicity as this French harp. Easy to play, inexpensive, and easy to carry in the pocket, it becomes the inevitable possession sometime or other of every country boy and, next to the whistle, becomes his first means of giving outward expression to the music that is pent up in his soul. To the Mennonite boys, especially, even older ones, this modest little instrument played an important role in their musical diversions. The Mennonite church authorities officially barred all musical instruments from the piano to the fiddle not only from the church, but the home as well. But this little French harp, perhaps because of its modesty, was about the only musical instrument not tabooed. To me its music, if well played, was heavenly. Even to this day nothing else has quite the magic power to bring back the gay laughter of lighthearted boys and girls on country lawns under a moonlit sky or to recall the thrills of a sleighing party on frosty nights on its way to some spelling school as a few familiar strains from the old-time French harp.

With the companions of my high school days I had few social contacts. Ben, in the meantime, had moved back to the farm. Among the other boys whom I had known there were no kindred spirits. As for the girls, my parents shared the traditional Mennonite country prejudice against anything that might lead to a life partnership between Mennonite country boys and non-Mennonite town girls. And in the country, to call on a girl more than once was a sign that you were going to be married. The first call was about equal to a proposal; while to see her but once meant that you wanted to marry her, but "got the mitten" instead. Except for an occasional call on Alice, or a meeting with her at a favorite trysting place near the log where I had cut both our names sometime before, I saw little during this time of those with whom I studied and played in the happy high school days.

During all this time I kept up my interest in books, my reading gradually taking a turn in the direction of history. This interest in political affairs was due, as already indicated, to the fact that our village had been associated at one time or another with the activities of a number of unusually famous men. The old courthouse, though unoccupied now, still stood a mute reminder of Abraham Lincoln's ten years of practice here; but Lincoln was not the only famous man who had frequented the streets of Metamora. Bob Ingersoll, of nearby Peoria, had often appeared in the village, both as a practicing lawyer and as an orator for special occasions, and was well known to a number of our leading citizens.

Then, too, there had been men of more local fame who had lived in the little town, who, although not prominently connected with the affairs of the nation at the time, had been associated with some of the big events of the world's history which I had read about in my school books. Among these was an attorney by the name of Feilitch, a former Hungarian nobleman, who had come to Metamora soon after the Civil War. Feilitch had rather a romantic career as a young man. He had been a member of the bodyguard of the unfortunate emperor Maximilian at the time of the latter's ill-fated Mexican expedition. After the emperor's death the young soldier who had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the meantime was imprisoned by the Mexican president to meet the fate, no doubt, of his chief. But escaping from captivity he fled to America, where he found his way to the prairie state, finally landing in a small village in the heart of that state to take up the practice of law. This was just the kind of a story to fire a boy's imagination and put reality into the faraway facts that went by the name of history.

These men were all of the past; but one morning in the summer of the early nineties Metamora awoke to find that she was still reaping reflected glory from a famous former fellow townsman whom the native villagers had nearly all forgotten years before. It was reported one day during the meeting of the democratic convention which nominated Grover Cleveland for his second term that his running mate was a man by the name of Adlai E. Stevenson from Bloomington. Several of the older inhabitants recalled that Stevenson had practiced law in Metamora during the Civil War. Sure enough, when our weekly *Inter-Ocean* arrived a few days later, there was the picture of Stevenson, which Aunt Mary said "looked just like him," and an account of his early law practice in our town.

Some time later in the campaign the *Inter-Ocean,* which was a stanch Republican paper, printed a long article charging Stevenson with pro-Southern sympathies during the war. The article included an interview with a number of our Republican citizens who testified that the vice-presidential candidate had been a copperhead in those trying times, and that he had even organized a company of copperheads in the community. One of the men testified that on the day following the assassination of President Lincoln, Stevenson, coming into Rohman's grocery store, remarked that the death of Lincoln was the most fortunate event for the country since the war began.

The attempt of Stevenson's former fellow townsmen to discredit him evidently had little effect, for he was easily elected Vice-President on the Cleveland ticket. If he ever saw the *Inter-Ocean* article, and likely he did, he must soon have forgotten it; for some years later, after he had become known to fame, he honored the scene of his maiden efforts as a struggling lawyer with a visit, as the orator of the day and the honored guest of the village. Although I was an ardent Republican, Stevenson's connection with our small community gave me an added interest in the study of political affairs.

While all these changes were taking place in my little world our family, too, had reached that inevitable stage in the history of every family group when the process of disintegration must set in. We had been a happy family group of four boys and four younger sisters. Now Joe and Sam had already been married and left the home nest. I was soon to start for college, thus leaving Johnie to carry on with the farm; and soon he, too, would go. And so Father and Mother began to plan the step they had long been looking forward to, though not without a certain feeling of regret—to retire from active farming and enjoy a well-earned rest. But it was too late for Mother. Although we did not know it then, she paid for the long, hard years on the farm, caring for her large family, in ruined health. She developed a cough which at first we did not think serious, but which grew steadily more alarming, and in the course of the next year or two cast an ever-deepening shadow of gloom over all the anticipated joys of the proposed release from farm drudgery.

I was now twenty years old and would soon be of that legal age when, according to all country traditions, a boy becomes master of his own fate. My father generously permitted me to keep the proceeds of my last year's salary. Although I had decided on college, I found it difficult to decide just which college. I had never had any experience with colleges, nor had any of my family. At Elkhart I had met several young Mennonites from Ohio who had attended a school which they called a college at Ada; and a girl friend I had met at the institute lived near there. I had about decided for a while to go to Ada. And so, having no guidance, I made my choice blindly. I was not particularly concerned about perfecting myself in the art of teaching. I was merely hungry for knowledge. I had a passion for learning and for knowing the world. By the close of my last year as a teacher I had forgotten my friend near Ada and decided to find a college nearer home. Because it was nearby, because Lyon Karr had been a graduate of the institution, and I had seen a catalogue of the school, I decided to attend the state normal school at Normal, thinking all the time that I was about to go to college.

12

Two Years at Normal School

I DID NOT completely break away from the atmosphere of the farm when I started to school in the fall. The normal school was still very much of a rural institution. The town of Normal itself, although on the outskirts of Bloomington, a city of some twenty-five thousand, was hardly more than a prairie village, separated on all sides by scarcely more than a ten-minute walk from open fields and green pastures. The lawns were large and often enclosed with a picket fence. The business houses were all strung along Main Street, which was divided into two parts, an east and a west side, by the railroad. The east side, however, had long been deserted. The buildings here were empty and the windows nailed shut, giving this end of the town a most desolate and forbidding aspect. The side streets were unpaved and after a rain, disagreeably muddy. Grass and weeds were left to grow luxuriantly along the sides.

Most of the dwelling houses were of the old-fashioned rambling sort; a few were modern. In the northeastern corner of the village was the Negro section, consisting of a cluster of ramshackle huts and a dilapidated church. Many of the white inhabitants, aside from the distinctive school population, were retired farmers who brought their cows and chickens with them or widows who had moved in from the surrounding villages to make a living by keeping roomers and boarders. We went to sleep in the evening with the subdued chirp of the cricket and the shrill song of the katydid ringing in our ears and awoke in the morning to the chorus of crowing roosters and bawling calves.

John Camp and I had engaged our room, sight unseen, early in the summer from a maiden lady who had formerly lived in our county, and had advertised with Lyon Karr for two "quiet, well behaved, and respectable boys." Lyon Karr, thinking that John and I were eminently qualified for the place, referred the request to us. We found the room to be an upstairs room in a little story and a half building about two blocks from the university campus. The house had no modern improvements, no bath, no electric light, and no provision for heating except a little coal stove. We had never been used to "modern improvements," however, and so did not greatly miss them here. We were satisfied with the room, small and primitive though it was, and especially with the price of fifty cents per week each. Five dollars all told for the entire winter, as I remember now, was what we paid for coal.

The students, too, I soon found out were for the most part like myself from the rural districts, or small villages, preparing themselves to teach in the elementary and small high schools of the state. No one except, perhaps, an Illinois Central Railway mail clerk would have been able to recognize above a half dozen or so of the addresses given by the students on the registrar's list—such addresses as Swan Creek, Prairie Home, Alpine Heights, Harkness Corners, Stillman Valley, Cooks Mills, Lena, and Piper City. I felt very much at home in this rural setting of country boys and girls and green fields and cows. It did not take me long to adjust to the new life, and I was soon immersed in the regular routine of school work.

I was rather disappointed from the first, however, with the curriculum offered. The official title of the school was rather pretentious and misleading—the Illinois State Normal University. It was not a university, nor even a college. It gave no degrees. In fact, it was merely a big elementary training school, reverting back in subject matter to the subjects I thought I had left forever, back in the district school. The whole course was prescribed. There was no choice left open to the student except to drop "spelling" if he succeeded in passing the examination which all students had to take at the end of the second week. And so, I soon found myself busy again, as I had been in my pre-high school days, with arithmetic, grammar, reading, and geography. We even had penmanship. I passed in spelling. My United

States history text was the identical book, Barnes's *Brief History*, which I had studied and taught in the country school. I already knew the book by heart. I knew every footnote, where the pictures were, and just where on the page each president's administration began. If I was to have any interest whatever in history, it would have to be furnished by the teacher; it could not be inspired by the text. Other texts, likewise, were such as we all had read over many times in our elementary school days.

I was keenly disappointed in my failure to enter the new fields of knowledge which I had thought the heritage of every boy acquiring a higher education. To be sure, my idea as to what should be the content of the term *education* was somewhat vague; neither was I sure as to what the curriculum of a college course should be. Many of us, I think, were confused as to the differences between the courses in the various types of schools. I was under the impression that what even the prospective teacher needed in order to further prepare himself for his work was more "education"; and that education was a sort of standard commodity, the same wherever pursued, consisting largely in mastering ever widening and new fields of knowledge. But I found out some time later that in the normal school it might mean rather a molding process, and a reorganization of subjects already known. Our schoolmasters were evidently not eager to disillusion us, either. When they made light of the kind of education the students at the State University of Champaign were getting, I thought, of course, they had in mind the whole content of the curriculum and not merely the technical process of presenting the subject matter. The normal faculty, at least so it seemed to me, wished to leave us under the impression that the type of "education" handed out at Champaign was inferior to the normal brand. Of course, I also have since found out that every educational institution in the land, from Valparaiso to Harvard, has the happy faculty of inspiring its student body with the lofty idea that they belong to the elect and that our alma maters like our *maters* are the queens of the earth.

Evidently my disappointment in the choice of subject matter did not prevent me from being a fairly good student. I felt very proud when at the end of the second week one morning in chapel I heard my name called with several others as worthy of promotion to Section F—a select group of the better students. The same week, too, I was excused from spelling, another badge of honor which carried with it much more distinction among the students than it merited as a mere evidence of mental superiority. All these tokens of preferment, slight and insignificant though they were, gave me confidence in myself and went far to soften my displeasure with the limited curriculum.

The social atmosphere of the student body naturally was decidedly democratic. There were only a few students from the larger cities. Bloomington, nearby, always furnished a small group. There were two from Chicago. One was Charley Myall, a slender, squint-eyed and near-sighted youth, who wore his sandy hair cut straight across the back of his neck like that of an old-time Amishman. He had a high-pitched voice like a woman's and wore eye glasses tied to his coat lapel, like an Englishman's monocle, with a long black ribbon. He, naturally, was not popular among the boys, who regarded him as somewhat of a sissy, but he seemed to take well with the girls and was a special favorite of the preceptress and English professor, J. Rose Colby, largely, so we thought, because he wrote poetry and was otherwise harmless, and especially, perhaps, because he came to normal all the way from Chicago. The other was a handsome young man by the name of Chester Echols. He was our orator that year at the Emporia interstate contest and was also the president of our local lecture board. When T. Dewit Talmadge, after being introduced by Echols, in the course of the lecture turned to him and called him the handsomest man he had ever met, we all cheered. It was said that he was preparing for the study of medicine; but why he should begin his preparation for a medical career in an institution that turned out schoolteachers I never could understand. There may have been a few other students from some of the smaller cities of the state. But they were too few in number to lend any metropolitan flavor to the social atmosphere of the school, even had they been capable of doing so. The dominant tone was contributed by the great majority of us who came from the tall timber.

There were no fraternities or clubs in Normal; no distinctive social organizations or cliques; no high-toned social occasions—senior and junior proms, or fraternity dances, which play such a conspicuous role in the social life of most college student bodies. I do not believe that there was a single swallow tail coat in town among either the faculty or the students; and if there had been there would have been no occasion for wearing it. Aside from a few temporary groupings, social functions were public and consisted largely of faculty "grinds" and church and Christian Association receptions. In the absence of other social centers, the boarding clubs often assumed that role.

The dearth of social organizations, no doubt, accounts to a large degree for the strong literary society spirit which prevailed in the school. There were two societies—the Philadelphian and the Wrightonian. I was a Philadelphian. Every student was forced to join one or the other of these societies. It was one of the requirements, like arithmetic or spelling. Each spring there was a contest which was the big event of the year. It was more exciting than any football victory and of more social interest than a senior prom. To secure a position on one of the contesting teams was the highest honor attainable; while to win a contest insured one of immortality in his own society and distinguished him before the whole institution as worthy of adoration beyond that of any football hero.

Athletics played but a slight role in the school. The boys were rather few in number in proportion to the whole enrollment. Like most normal schools this, too, was largely a girls' school. The athletic teams had no paid coach and seldom won a game. Interest was low among the students in the intercollegiate contests. There was no cheering, no distinctive school yell, and there were no bleachers on the campus for the spectators. Gymnastics of the mind was given much more attention than that of the body.

The lecture course, too, was quite universally attended. Here I had my first opportunity of seeing and hearing some of the famous men I had heard and read about. Among those I remember best and in whom I was most interested was T. Dewit Talmadge, at that time perhaps the leading preacher in America, at least the best advertised. He was editor of the *Christian Herald* and occupied a pulpit in New York. His sermons were syndicated through all the leading metropolitan papers in the country, and his name was almost a household word. His lecture on this occasion was largely attended. The large assembly hall used for such meetings was crowded to capacity. A number of chairs were placed on the platform about the speaker's stand. I was glad to exchange my seat on the main floor for a chair on the stage where I could get a close view of the lecturer. I remember little of what the speaker said, but I do recollect the intense pleasure with which I listened to his deep mellow voice as he painted for us most beautiful word pictures of scenes from a trip to Europe he had just completed. Especially dramatic was his description in long drawn out, rolling syllables of the bells, b-e-l-l-s of the Kremlin in Moscow. This was my first chance to hear a really great orator, and I was wonderfully impressed. Talmadge has long since been forgotten. He left nothing in print by which he is remembered. He was one of those orators who rose to fame not because of what he said, but because of his power to entrance his hearers through his artistic use of the spoken word.

Another great speaker I heard that fall was Bryan who, in his first race for the presidency, included Bloomington in his almost house-to-house canvass that year. He was just thirty-six, in the vigor of youth, fresh from his dramatic triumph at the Chicago convention. An immense throng came to hear him. The speech was delivered in Franklin Park, a small open space around which lived some of the leading business and professional men of the city. These were nearly all Republicans, evidently, for from nearly every front porch was unfurled an American flag with a wide gold band sewed to its folds, the symbol in that campaign of the "paramount" Republican issue. From all the houses except one on the extreme southeastern corner of the square—the home of the democratic nominee for the vice-presidency, Adlai E. Stevenson. And so all through his speech as he declaimed against the iniquity of crucifying labor on a cross of gold, the silver-tongued orator from the Platte had to face these gold-adorned American flags—an ominous sign that not all who came to hear would remain to vote for him. The immense crowd made it impossible to hear the speaker to the best advantage. I recall little of his argument, but I do remember the charm of his personality, his broad expansive smile, his musical voice, and the pleasure both he and his wife displayed in shaking hands with the crowd after the speech. Bryan was the first presidential candidate I had ever seen, and he was a wonderful man to me. I heard him many times afterward, but never did I listen to him again with the same thrill as on this first youthful occasion. Nevertheless, that fall I cast my first vote for William McKinley.

Before the leaves began to fall in October the whole school one Saturday took a holiday excursion to a favorite picnic ground along the Lake Erie Railroad and Mackinaw River now called Mackinaw Dells. Since one of the objectives of this excursion was to secure bird specimens for the zoology class, a number of us armed ourselves with shotguns for that purpose. All day long the report of the guns from the different parts of the wooded grounds gave evidence that this part of the program was not forgotten. When we gathered our day's kill in the evening, we found that we had slaughtered one-hundred-and-forty birds, all song birds. My only purpose in referring to this episode is to show how completely public opinion may change in the course of years on many questions that concern our relationship to the world about us. Today such an act would be considered a crime punishable in most states with a heavy fine. At that time it was sponsored by a normal school whose business it was to train teachers. To be sure, the ostensible justification for the slaughter was to obtain specimens for study. But a half dozen would have answered just as well.

The academic atmosphere at Normal was that of the elementary public school. Not for a moment were we allowed to forget that we were in school. In fact, to me it seemed merely my country school written large. Not only did we study reading, writing, and arithmetic over again; we studied them in the old schoolroom atmosphere. Although grown men and women, we were assumed to be ten-year-olds and were disciplined accordingly. We were assigned definite seats in the assembly room, sharply called down for whispering to our neighbors, scolded when we did not get our lessons, and sent out of the room if we smiled at the wrong time. The professors never forgot that they were schoolmasters. To be sure, the birch rod was nowhere in sight, but it would have been entirely in keeping with the general spirit of things had one of the twenty-five-year-old maidens, raising her hand, asked, "Teacher, please may I go out?" For to leave the room without permission was as serious an infraction of the rules for the twenty-five-year-olds at Normal as it was for the ten-year-olds in the district school.

Perhaps it was because of the necessary absence of the rod that so many of the professors resorted to biting sarcasm as a weapon of discipline and an aid to scholastic progress. Professor Felmly, now of blessed memory, but then head of the mathematics department, had the reputation of being the most adept dispenser of this means of discipline. One day I heard the screams of a girl in one of the corridors of the main building. I was later told that she had come from the mathematician's room, having gone into hysterics over some sharp reproof administered by the professor for her inability to comprehend the intricacies of some arithmetic problem he was demonstrating.

Miss Hartman, my teacher in mathematics, was not far behind her chief in the use of a nimble wit and a sharp tongue. Mother Hartman, as we called her, had been with the institution from time immemorial. No one knew just how old she was, but it was a common saying among her students that the big open-faced man's watch which she constantly carried had at one time belonged to her sweetheart who had been killed in the Civil War. She never hesitated to use her sharp tongue when the occasion demanded. One day, after finding her algebra class rather dull and unusually unresponsive, she threw her text on the desk exclaiming, "Well, I might as well go home and plant potatoes in my garden, or hoe weeds, since I can't get a man to do it. I don't seem to be able to either have weeds or plant seeds here, the soil is too thin." And she meant it, too, though I do not remember whether she actually carried out her threat at the time.

Professor McCormack, who taught history and geography, could also be quite stern at times, but since I liked his subjects and he gave me my best grades, and also because I sang in his choir in the Methodist church, I had no particular fault to find with him. Miss Milner, the librarian—Angie, we called her—could make you feel like five cents if ever she caught you whispering to your neighbor in the reading room. Only Professor Colton of the science department and Miss Mavity the grammar teacher, seemingly, were able to forget their schoolmaster manners and think of their students as grown-ups rather than mere school children. I was sorry to find a few years later when I returned as an instructor in the summer school that the former had died and was not surprised to learn that the latter was happily married.

In spite of the barren subject matter and cross teachers, however, the associations with fellow students were enjoyable. My election as president of the local Y.M.C.A. for the coming year and a pleasant trip to Emporia, Kansas, in the spring with our orator for the interstate contest furnished added justification for a return to school for another year. To better prepare myself for the work of the Y.M.C.A. I decided to attend the ten-day conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, after the close of the spring term.

Geneva was both a revelation and an inspiration to me. The beautiful blue lake, with water clear as crystal, encircled by steep bluffs covered with majestic forest trees, with its balmy atmosphere and fine sandy beach, furnished a most charming vacation ground. Boating, swimming—I bought my first swimming suit here—and the daily tramp through the groves whetted our appetites to the point where we thoroughly enjoyed the plain but wholesome food prepared by the cooks of the camp. A perfect night's rest in the open tents under the big trees, unbroken save by the early chorus of bird song, renewed our strength for another day of study and play.

With such a perfect physical setting we enjoyed our social contacts to the uttermost. It was a revelation to me to meet so many college men from all the middle west colleges and universities, such institutions as Oberlin, Northwestern, University of Illinois, and others, who at the same time were also the leading athletes, prize orators, and social leaders in their respective schools. I found that religion need not necessarily be divorced from brains, physical prowess, or social prestige. I was determined to go back to my own campus at Normal in the fall and raise the work of the Y.M.C.A. to a position of dignity equal to that of any of the other school activities.

Among the men I met here was a student from Northwestern who, because of my later almost lifelong association with him in Mennonite educational enterprises, should be mentioned in this record. I first saw him in one corner of the car on the train out from Chicago to Lake Geneva with a group of Northwestern students wearing little purple caps and diminutive purple ties, entertaining the rest of us with their college songs and yells. When later in the camp I learned that he was a Mennonite I looked him up and soon came to know him quite well. His name was Noah E. Byers, soon to become principal of the Elkhart Institute and later president of Goshen College.

But above all, the greatest inspiration at Geneva came from the contact with its leaders—John R. Mott, then just beginning his long career as a Christian statesman; chancellor McDowell, later a well-known Methodist bishop; and others. Robert E. Speer was still in the making, while Sherwood Eddy was not yet heard of. The Bible classes, the numerous life work conferences, and especially the twilight meetings on the hillside facing the lake, all left their subtle impress upon my mind. I came home with a new conception of life's meaning and an enlarged vision of its possibilities, fully determined to return to Geneva as soon and as often as possible. Its subtle influence like a sweet fragrance lingered with me for many days. All through the summer as I tramped back and forth along the corn rows or followed the binder around the field I found myself reliving some of the deep experiences of the conference, or humming over the melody of the conference song, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord, I'll be what you want me to be."

With the coming of September I was eager to return to school. At this point John Camp and I parted company in our educational careers. We had attended high school together; had both taught in the country schools for several years, and for one year had been roommates at Normal. John was a good reliable student, a steady plodder. But the monotony of reviewing the common branches under stern schoolmasters was too much for him. He decided to return to the soil, as Ben had done before him. A year or two later he married a well-to-do cousin of mine and settled down to the easygoing life of a prosperous farmer. He has since retired and is now living from the income of his broad acres.

I filled a little larger niche in the general life of the school this year than I had before. As president of the Y.M.C.A. I felt that I was identified with one of the influential organizations of the institution. I presided at important meetings in the churches and occasionally stood on the platform of the assembly room by the side of the president to make announcements, all of which added not a little to my sense of responsibility and feeling that at least I was not a nonentity.

I found, too, that the little music I had learned in the country singing school could be turned to advantage. I had a fair voice which I improved somewhat by lessons at Illinois Wesleyan in Bloomington. I could read notes on a music sheet as readily as words on a printed page—rather a rare accomplishment among young men. With three others I formed a quartet which frequently appeared on the program of literary societies and other school functions. We even sang for a faculty social once, where I was rather surprised, but greatly delighted, to find that the faculty were human, and in spite of their schoolroom dignity, when off duty and in their leisure time they played the same simple games and guessed at the same foolish riddles that went the rounds in an ordinary church social among common folks.

One time, when on the Philadelphian program, we decided to add a bit of realism to our music and thus gain an effect by mere noise which we could not produce by the charm of our voices. The song was "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground," a favorite survival from the Civil War period, which was still "the" war at that time, though another war—that with Spain—was just in the offing. On the stage, back of the curtain, we had placed a number of sticks of wood with red electric light bulbs, so arranged as to give the whole a campfire effect. Dressed in the blue uniforms and the peculiar little soldier caps of the war days, seated about the make-believe campfire, we began to sing the old song as the lights in the hall were turned out and the curtain was raised. At the close of the first verse the second bass fired an old musket out of the rear window, just to call the attention of those who might have still had some doubt about it that this was a war song. The sudden shuffling of chairs and a few screams of surprise which followed all over the darkened room satisfied us that we had succeeded in making the desired impression. The personnel of this quartet consisted of a rather unusual assortment of names. The first tenor was Jones, the music director; I sang second tenor; Brown was first bass; and Krug, second bass.

I also took an active part in the work of the literary society, being especially interested in debating. One debate I remember particularly because of the subject: "Resolved that other planets are inhabited." I took the affirmative and won the decision. Winning this debate I think enhanced my reputation somewhat as a debater among the members of my society; and when debaters were chosen in the spring to represent section C in our contest with the Wrightonians I had become a logical candidate for a position on our team. But one of the prominent girls of our society, the vice-president, because she opposed the candidacy of a certain young man in the contest as orator, and partly too, no doubt, because she thought that one who could prove that the moon was inhabited must be possessed of considerable persuasive ability, persuaded me to refuse a place on the debating team and become a candidate for the more honorable position as orator. I listened to the temptress and secured neither place.

During all this time the pleasure of my school work was shadowed by a dark cloud that hung over our home. Mother had taken to her bed early in the summer. As the months passed by she grew continually weaker, and our hopes for her recovery grew fainter. By winter we knew that her passing was but a matter of time. Finally one dreary, stormy Sunday afternoon in January I received a telegram from Joe, "Mother very low, come home." I arrived home that same evening to find Mother had rallied again, but was only partly conscious. For another week she lingered between life and death. Then one morning Father called us all together. We knew what it meant. For days we had dreaded this moment. With Uncle Pete and Aunt Anna and the family about her bedside, we watched her spirit pass out, with her last breath whispering a familiar old song that had been dear to her—words which my father cherished ever afterward as a priceless possession.

How meaningless and empty the routine affairs of our daily life seem in the presence of the death of some loved one. Nothing else seems worthwhile and the usual daily tasks almost a mockery. This was the first break in our family circle. We stood about dazed and helpless, and the whole world seemed to have gone out from under our feet. After the first outburst of grief had somewhat spent itself in the course of several hours, we awoke to the hard fact that the work of the world would still have to go on. The morning chores were still waiting to be done. But how unsympathetic and cruel the belated hum of the cream separator and the rattle of the breakfast dishes seemed that morning. It was not until after the funeral that the world began to assume a little of its normal attitude again; but it was never again the same to any of us. There remained a vacancy that could never be filled, even though time, that great healer of every wound, might in the end gradually transmute the first pangs of grief into a sweet and fragrant memory.

Mother died in the prime of life, at the age of fifty-four, as a sacrifice to her family and to the traditions of her people. I was told by those who long had known her that she was beautiful in her girlhood; but the bloom of youth passed early from her cheek. I remember her as prematurely wrinkled, with form bent and hands calloused from hard toil. Her work was never ended. Seven days in the week, from early morning to late at night, she was busy with her family cares and routine of household drudgery—cooking, scrubbing, sewing, and mending. Even Sunday, a day of rest to all the others, for her was often the hardest of all. Her four older children were boys, and the four younger, girls, who were able to help her only after it was already too late.

Her exacting household duties left her little time or opportunity for enjoying many of the luxuries of life. She never saw much of the world. She spent her whole life within the boundaries of two adjoining townships, and seldom stepped outside. Beyond a few trips to Peoria, she had never seen a big city. She never attended a county fair, and never rode on a railway train.

The greatest tragedy of all was that this life of self-denial was so unnecessary. We were not poor; Father was considered well-to-do by his neighbors. My mother's lot was not exceptional at that time, but rather the common experience of most of the Mennonite farm women of her day. Like them, she had become the slave of earlier habits of thrift and industry, now no longer necessary, a slave to the needs of her growing family and to the conventions and ideals of her people. It was a pity that she could not have lived for at least a few years longer. She died just as her boys had all grown up and moved out of the family circle and her girls had reached an age when they could have relieved her of all her household responsibilities; and just as the automobile, the telephone, and the phonograph were about to release the coming generation of farm women from the lonely isolation which had doomed the early pioneers on the farm to live within such narrow and dreary intellectual and social limits.

I returned to school after the funeral, but my heart was no longer in my work. In fact, I had already decided to quit Normal at the end of the year. Although the study of psychology and several other subjects opened up new and interesting fields of investigation, most of my time was still devoted to a review of the common branches. A visit to an Iowa Sunday school convention, in which I had a part on the program, and made against the advice of President Cook, sealed my doom. Three of my four teachers, refusing to give me a chance to make up my back work, gave me a failing grade for the spring term. But since I had already been elected to a teaching position in the Elkhart Institute which, in the meantime, had become a privately controlled church institution, and since I did not intend to return, I was not greatly disturbed by the failures that were marked up against me—the only failures on my whole academic career.

The reader of this narrative may think that I have been unduly severe, and perhaps somewhat unfair in my criticism of Normal and its teachers. I should remember, he may say, that this was not a college, but a teacher's training school for the elementary and secondary educational institutions of the state; and that if I was more interested in widening my field of general knowledge than in learning the art of teaching I was out of place here and should have gone elsewhere. A guilty feeling that there may be more than a grain of truth to this charge constrains me to suggest that these criticisms merely represent my own personal reactions to the educational methods employed. Others may not have been likewise affected.

It seemed to me that the whole purpose of the normal technique was to mold all prospective teachers to a common type and reduce them all to a common denominator. As for myself, I did not want to be molded. I chafed under the process. I wanted more room for spontaneity and initiative than was permitted by the rigid formulas and the set rules which normal instructors followed in the pedagogical methods. Much time was wasted, in my judgment, in the technique of asking questions in the classroom, as though the ability to befuddle the thinking processes of the student and to convince him of his profound ignorance of even the most elementary rudiments of learning constituted the sole art of teaching. The Socratic method was carried to absurd lengths, so it seemed to me. No amount of steady pumping, or artful fishing, will draw from an empty mind facts that are not there, and I never could understand the necessity of such a fishing process.

To my mind the function of the teacher was to guide the student to the great fields of knowledge and suggest, by example as well as through instruction, right attitudes and ideals of life. The student's interest must first be aroused, and the best teaching technique is that which engenders an abiding enthusiasm for the fields of knowledge in question. An enthusiastic teacher, thoroughly acquainted with his subject, is still worth a hundred skillfully trained questioners, who have more method than substance, and more correct technique than enthusiasm for subject matter.

Few scholars developed among normal graduates. Among my classmates who attended during my two-years stay I remember only two or three who continued their scholastic career beyond the local institution. Most of them remained to the end of their days as teachers in the smaller schools of the state, thoroughly convinced that theirs was a superior brand of education to that found in the universities and colleges of the land. To train teachers for the public schools was, of course, the sole objective of the normal method; and to that extent, at least, the institution functioned well. But as for me, the thinness of subject matter, the schoolmaster atmosphere assumed by the faculty, the rigid insistence on expressing all truth according to set rules and rigid formulas—all this smothered like a wet blanket all my enthusiasm for the life of a scholar with which I had begun my educational career two years before. I decided to quit without finishing the prescribed three-years course.

My teaching program for the coming year at Elkhart included a variety of subjects around a nucleus of English and Latin. President Coffman of the board of trustees, in writing to me concerning the salary I was to receive for the year's work, informed me that my predecessor, a young Pennsylvanian by the name of Yoder, who was a man of unusual ability, had been paid five hundred dollars for the year's work. But the board, not expecting as much from me, did not consider themselves justified in offering me the same munificent sum paid Yoder. But, suggested Coffman, the board might be willing to pay me forty-five dollars per month. Although the salary was small, no more than was being paid in the country schools at that time, I accepted the offer, anticipating that the work would be both enjoyable and otherwise profitable to me, though unremunerative. I was young, my needs were few, and my tastes simple. I did not need much money. I faced the future with the enthusiasm born of hope and youthful confidence.

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Pioneering in Mennonite Education

My decision in the fall to make the trip to Elkhart by bicycle, a distance of over two hundred miles, assumed in my mind somewhat the proportions of an unusual adventure. I left home one morning in middle September. My father, still feeling deeply the loss of my mother, and unusually moved by every suggestion of a further breaking up of our family circle, followed me to the front gate where I bade him good-by as I mounted my wheel and started up the east road. Here he stood watching me until I had disappeared beyond the Wüthrich hill on my way to Eureka, where I expected to follow the T. P. and W. Railroad eastward. This was still before the day of automobile road maps, but I was sure there would be a wagon road paralleling the railroad as far as Logansport, from whence I hoped to find a northerly route in the direction of my destination.

It was a fine early autumn day. The sky was clear and blue; the air, mild and soft. The horizon across the plowed fields and over the tops of the tasseled corn rows assumed that hazy, shimmering appearance so common in the early fall days just before the Indian summer season sets in. The tall dry grass along the roadside was as full of the song of crickets as the air of floating cobwebs. The dirt roads furnished a fairly good and smooth, though rather narrow, bicycle track.

I was in fine spirits and thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of riding over unfamiliar country roads and through strange villages, ready for any adventure that might turn up. I remember only one unusual thrill of the day, however. Just out of

Piper City, as I was passing a farm house, I suddenly heard the yelp of a dog directly in the rear. Expecting an attack I looked back, but was surprised to see a big yellow Saint Bernard running in the opposite direction as fast as his legs could carry him. A tuft of yellow hair in my sprocket wheel told the story. The dog evidently rushed after me without barking as I passed, with intentions that seemed evident, though known only to himself. But as he reached the side of my wheel his big bushy tail was caught in the sprocket chain, resulting in a sudden change of plans on the part of the big Bernard. The yelp I heard was not a warning of attack, but a signal of distress. This narrow escape from the bite of a dog, a possibility I never relished along country roads, added just enough zest to the events of the day to give the journey a bit of the flavor of an adventure.

Without realizing it, however, I exerted myself beyond my strength that day. To ride ten or twelves miles an hour under a warm September sun, and against a contrary wind, taxed every ounce of surplus strength I had. Desirous of covering as much ground as possible while the roads were good, I took little time for rest. In nearly every town through which I passed I stopped just long enough to quench my thirst with a bottle of "pop," or a glass of lemonade; and to wash the sweat from my hot face with a few splashes of cold water from the village watering trough. For weeks afterward I suffered from the excesses of this strenuous day. That evening, just about dusk, I rode into Watseka, near the state line, hot, thirsty, and tired, having made about eighty miles since nine o'clock that morning.

I awoke the next morning to find that a heavy rain during the night had converted the heavy dirt roads into a mud too sticky for bicycle traffic. Consequently, I boarded the first train for Logansport, where I arrived a little before noon. From here I followed a heavily-graveled pike leading northward in the direction of South Bend. Although the rain continued and the water stood about everywhere in puddles, I kept on since the gravel roads were not affected by rain as were the dirt roads of Illinois. After several hours of strenuous wheeling over heavy roads through Rochester and the pickle country beyond, I arrived at Plymouth late in the afternoon, tired and more than willing to change bicycling for an easier mode of travel for the rest of the journey. Taking a train at the latter place I arrived at South Bend near midnight and at Elkhart a little later.

The following morning I found my way to the home of J. S. Coffman, the president of the board of trustees, and my prospective home for the coming year. For a long time afterward I entertained a suspicion that the president of the board as well as certain members of his family, which consisted of a houseful of grown sons and daughters, were somewhat disappointed in the initial appearance of the new English teacher. I was tired, almost sick, and, no doubt, looked it. My rough bicycle suit was not improved in looks by a day of sweat and dust, and another of rain and mud. My change of clothes lay packed in my trunk not yet arrived. A three day's growth of whiskers which I did not take the trouble to remove until later in the day was not the least of the factors that contributed to my unprepossessing appearance that morning. I was quite sure that all were thoroughly convinced that the board had made no mistake in offering me fifty dollars less for the year than they had paid my dashing predecessor Yoder. But whatever their first impression may have been, I soon found a most delightful home with the Coffman family. For two years I enjoyed their hospitality. During that time the fine spirit of Christian devotion, as well as the high tone of refinement and culture which dominated their whole family life was both an inspiration and a continued source of pleasure to me and was not the least of the factors that made these two years of my early teaching experience perhaps the most pleasant of my whole educational career.

The Elkhart Institute, I soon discovered, had made some progress since I had been a student there several summers before. Its sessions were now no longer held in a rented room downtown, but in a building of its own, erected on the southern outskirts of the city. This structure had a two-story elevation on the side facing the street; but from the rear, due to the complete exposure of the basement wall caused by a sudden slope of the ground, it had the appearance of a rather imposing three-story edifice. More than once in the course of the year as I had need for one reason or another to apologize for our meager equipment and humble beginnings my self-respect was considerably increased as from a vantage point some distance to the west across a low swampy field I viewed this imposing three-storied, many-windowed, rear wall of the school building which seemed so much more modest when viewed from the front street.

Modest as this first home of the institute was, however, it was amply large to meet all the demands made upon it for some years. When some time later the school had been removed to the neighboring city of Goshen, the building was sold and did service as a factory building; then later again as a schoolhouse for another wing of the denomination; and when this enterprise finally failed it was torn down before its day. When, nearly thirty years later, I visited the site where once the building had stood, I found that what had once been a deserted street and an uninhabited swamp had been completely built up with fine new residences; and I had some difficulty in recognizing the hole in the ground just across from the plain little Mennonite meetinghouse on Prairie Street as the scene of my pioneer efforts in the field of higher education among the Mennonites.

The management of the institution also had undergone a complete change. It was no longer a private venture run for profit after the example of its earlier prototypes at Ada and Valparaiso. It had become a church institution controlled by a school association consisting of a number of Mennonite ministers and interested laymen, largely from northern Indiana and Ohio, who realized the need of providing educational facilities for the young people of the denomination.

Up to this time there had been very little interest among Mennonites in higher education. They were still almost exclusively a rural people, and the only future most of them looked forward to was a life on the farm. High school graduates among them were few, and college graduates practically none, especially among the ministers. To be sure, the more progressive wing of the denomination, the General Conference Mennonites, had founded a school at Wadsworth, Ohio, as early as 1868, for the training of ministers and church workers; but after a ten-year struggle this effort had to be abandoned for lack of financial support. The recent Russian immigrants also in the western states, who had inherited from their European ancestors a deep concern for the education of their children, had founded a secondary and Bible school [Bethel College] just a short time before at Newton, Kansas. But among the other branches of the Mennonites who formed by far the largest portion of the entire denomination there was very little interest anywhere in any educational program that went beyond the elementary courses in the public country schools.

Occasionally, of course, some young Mennonite boy, never a girl, more ambitious than his fellows in Pennsylvania, Indiana, or Ohio, strayed away to college. But he never came back to his people, nor the church of his youth, a fact that only prejudiced the conservative leaders all the more against the dangers of "worldly learning." It was the sacrificial efforts of such pioneers in the field of Mennonite education as J. S. Hartzler and J. S. Coffman that launched a movement which within the span of one generation resulted in the founding of not only one, but several Mennonite colleges throughout the land in which thousands of young Mennonite boys and girls during that time have gained an education, who otherwise might never have been privileged to see the inside of a college building. For a college still remains essentially a local institution, drawing its students largely from the church which sponsors it and from its immediate local community.

When I came to Elkhart as an instructor there were perhaps less than half a score of men in this branch of the denomination from which the institute hoped to draw its students who were prepared to teach such secondary subjects as were offered. The editor of the church paper at Elkhart, visiting my Latin class one day, marveled that I, a Mennonite, should be able to teach Latin, elementary though the work was. He has himself since become a college president. I was offered a teaching position here not because of any superior educational talents, but simply because I was practically the only available candidate for the position, being one of a very few of the young men who had gone away to school and yet remained a Mennonite.

Up to this time the board of trustees were unable to secure a faculty of Mennonites sufficiently prepared to offer the required courses. The institute began its official Mennonite career in this year of 1898. N. E. Byers, a recent college graduate, was the new principal. He and I offered all the academic courses. A young Canadian by the name of Norman Gingrich was put in charge of the commercial department; and J. S.

Hartzler, a middle-aged farmer-preacher from nearby and former country school teacher, taught the Bible subjects. We four constituted the first all-Mennonite faculty.

The institution, as thus constituted, had inherited a number of its ideals and educational policies from its predecessor—Dr. Mumaw's private normal school. The curriculum still covered the wide range of subject matter common to schools of that type. From an old announcement I find that the following courses were offered: Latin, scientific, commercial, normal, stenographic, Bible, physical culture, and elocution, all this given by four teachers. In the same bulletin it is stated that twenty-eight dollars pays for tuition, board, and furnished room for a term of ten weeks. It was not until some years later, after the Elkhart Institute had developed into Goshen College, that the curriculum shrank to the dimensions of a regular college course; and all these other various departments, relics of an ambitious program once common in a certain type of normal schools, were dropped one by one.

Twenty-four students presented themselves for registration on the opening day. The majority of these came from the local city and were enrolled in the commercial department. Four had attended the year before, two of whom were first cousins of Principal Byers and from his home town in Illinois. Perhaps ten or twelve represented the Mennonite communities of northern Indiana and Ohio. These were mature students who, having neglected their high school opportunities in their home communities, came to Elkhart in the hope that they might recover in a measure what they had lost.

My own work, though rather heavy, I soon learned to enjoy. A number of the students in my courses were of about my own age, serious minded, and devoted to their studies, thus making the classroom contacts a source of real pleasure and not an arduous grind. I still remembered a number of the young people of the city whom I had met several summers before. The countryside, too, with its woods and lakes, and the romantic St. Joe, easily reached by winding bicycle paths, had lost none of its charm for me. The Hoosier state with its corn shocks and pumpkins, idealized by Riley and Eggleston, was still a land of poetry to me and has remained so to this day above any other state in the union.

Of the several subjects I had to teach, American literature was easily the favorite. My enthusiasm for this subject was greatly deepened and my task as a teacher of it lightened by the reading of a helpful book just at this time, entitled the *Philosophy of Literature,* written by a local Indiana educator by the name of Thompson. The effective teaching of literature demands so much of pure literary appreciation and such a keen sympathetic insight into the intangible and subtle beauties of the object of study that the inexperienced teacher finds it the most difficult of all subjects to teach satisfactorily. He is glad for any concrete suggestions that will help him in his work.

This book of Thompson's outlined a number of well-known English and American masterpieces with definite suggestions as to specific objectives of study. The outline consisted of three parts—theme, embodiment, and style. Under "theme" the writer included the main thought of the selection; the "embodiment" consisted of the concrete incorporation of the theme; while the term "style" covered the whole of the artist's technique—choice of words, figures of speech, and such other literary devices as go into the creation of a work of literary art. In Bryant's "Waterfowl," which was one of the poems analyzed, the theme is found definitely stated in the last stanza—the guiding hand of Providence in the affairs of men. This thought is embodied in the flight of the lonely waterfowl, floating far from danger in the rosy depths of an evening sky on its solitary but certain way toward its summer home. The poem is an artistic whole. Every word and every detail of the physical setting are carefully selected by the poet with an eye to the effect on the central truth in the main theme.

The discovery of this book with its helpful suggestions for the study of literary masterpieces just at this time as I was floundering about in my English teaching, trying to find some tangible and definite objectives of study in my class work, was most opportune. I was able to apply this general scheme of study to other pieces of literature with the result that my teaching task became increasingly light and pleasant. It put meaning into my study. It occurred to me also that a sympathetic understanding of the mood in which the author wrote a given selection would greatly aid in an appreciation of his art. To immerse myself, therefore, in the atmosphere in which I thought

Bryant must have written his poems on the autumn days, I often found my way on a sunny October afternoon to the woods along the St. Joe where, sitting at the foot of the big elms and oaks, in the midst of a riot of autumn colors under a hazy Indian summer sky, with a soft breeze whispering through the treetops overhead, I read the "Forest Hymn" and the "Death of the Flowers" over and over again. On such occasions the "melancholy days," "the rustle of the autumn leaves to the rabbit's tread," and the "deep cool silence" of the forest were no longer mere poetic conceptions to me; they were living realities. I went back to my classes with renewed inspiration and a far deeper appreciation of the author's real mood and meaning than ever before.

I knew little of the canons of literary criticism; I was not well versed in literary technique; I was a novice in the art of teaching. But I was interested in my subject, and I think I was able to transfer some of that interest to my students. I later took my master's degree in English in one of the large universities, and continued to teach the subject for some years. But I am quite sure that I never taught it again with quite so much relish, nor with equal success as in that first fresh, green, enthusiastic year at the Elkhart Institute.

After a most delightful year, which passed all too rapidly, I attended a short summer session at Ann Arbor. Summer schools were still somewhat of an innovation at that time among the large universities, and the attendance at Ann Arbor this year was not large, barely two hundred. I remember little of the work of the summer and little of the university faculty. President Angell, at that time the dean of state university presidents in the middle west, addressed the student body several times. He was a kindly looking man, somewhat old-fashioned in appearance, with a round rosy face and a ring of whiskers under his chin, such as I had seen in the pictures of Horace Greeley. He spoke in an easy, conversational tone and had none of the qualities of an orator. But one of his admirers, an older student, confidentially informed me that President Angell was reputed to be the foremost "conservational" orator in America, whatever that might be. Another occasional speaker I recall was a Scotchman who lectured in a rich brogue on the subject of education. He perhaps did not see the smiles that passed through his audience and how near he came to stating the truth when in his comparisons of American with English educational practices he spoke of the equal opportunities of the sexes here as "coo-education."

The countryside about Ann Arbor I recall more vividly. Norman Gingrich, my roommate, and I spent much of our leisure time on our bicycles exploring the byways leading to the hills and woods about the town. On the very day of our arrival I rode out of the city to the south past a toll gate and over a toll road, a type of highway I saw for the first time. It was just haymaking time, I remember; the smell of the new-mown hay and the familiar sight of the farmers in the field at the task of pitching hay afforded a welcome relief for a brief spell from the seeming unreality of the life in the big academic halls on the campus. All through the summer my bicycle and I were real companions. Whenever the class routine became a trifle burdensome, it was only a few miles to the open country where a whiff of country air and the sight of familiar farm scenes refreshed my waning spirit and renewed my lagging courage to continue my education.

At the close of the summer session I accepted the invitation of my roommate to accompany him on a bicycle trip to his home near Berlin [now Kitchener], Ontario, Canada, a journey of several hundred miles. Starting from Ann Arbor early one morning, we arrived at Detroit, some forty miles away, for late breakfast. Here we took a boat northbound through Lake St. Clair as far as Sarnia on the Canadian side, where I experienced the thrill of seeing my first foreign flag on foreign soil. The customs officer here, after examining our baggage, collected a deposit of five dollars from each of us on our wheels, which he said would be paid back on our return. I had not counted on this deposit in my calculations of the cost of the trip.

We left Sarnia the next morning, headed eastward in the direction of London. The ride up into the heart of Ontario was not less interesting to me because it was through a foreign country. Everything seemed decidedly "English." At noon we stopped at what appeared to be a combination hotel and saloon, called a tavern; in the evening we had "tea" at a farm house along the way. From London, which we reached in the forenoon of the second day, we turned north, passing through a number of towns and villages with good old English names.

At Stratford I saw my first game of bowling on the green, a leisurely, gentlemanly game played in the late afternoon by elderly men in white duck trousers, silk shirts, and neckties—an athletic uniform unlike anything I had seen in the "States" as they call our country. At Woodstock, which we reached by the evening of the second day, I spent all my money down to the last quarter for bicycle repairs. Since Norman was also broke by this time, we started out the next morning on the last stretch of eighty miles with only a quarter between us for meals for the day and possible repairs. Fortunately, we had no further mishaps. Late that afternoon, tired and hungry, but grateful, we carried our wheels across a ford in the Grand River near Preston, the home of my roommate.

Several days of the week I spent here were devoted to gathering of proxies from members of the Elkhart Institute association, of whom there were a number among the Mennonites of this region, to be used in an approaching meeting of that organization at Elkhart. I returned to the latter city in time for the fall opening of school by train, not by bicycle.

The work of the school was hampered somewhat this year by a quarrel that had been gathering for several years among the chief promoters. The controlling organization, as already suggested, consisted of an association, like a stock company, with shares of twenty-five dollars par, each carrying the right to one vote. H. A. Mumaw, the original promoter, whose educational ideals were unsatisfactory to the churchmen, who hoped to make the institution a church school rather than a private commercial enterprise, had lost control of the organization. But for several years he kept up the struggle to win back his lost prestige.

In the meantime, the president of the board of trustees, who was also on the editorial staff of the Mennonite Publishing Company, questioned some of the sharp practices of the business manager of the publishing plant. In this way, by a union of all the elements opposed to President Coffman, this school quarrel soon spread beyond its original circle and degenerated into a general church fight, involving not only the local congregation but the whole Mennonite community of northern Indiana. The fight did not reach its climax until a year or two after I had left Elkhart. It finally ended in a split of the local church. The school party was practically outlawed by the local bishop, who was also the president of the publishing house and in sympathy, of course, with his business manager in this controversy. For a time the outlawed section of the church kept up its own church worship in an empty room downtown. This unfortunate church-school fight did not end until several years later when there was an all round confession of sins in meeting one Sunday morning among the survivors. The secretary of the institute had to confess to the sin of having uttered the ungallant wish, on a certain especially bitter occasion, that the business manager's wife might be relegated to the uncomfortable coasts of Guinea. Others repented of misdeeds equally bad. But all this happened after the president of the board of trustees had died, the business manager of the publishing house had resigned, and the school had been removed to another city.

My teaching work was again a pleasure this year as it had been the year before, though a little heavier; for I added to my already heavy schedule a course in Greek. The fact that I knew little about the subject did not deter me from teaching it in those days of youthful daring. But when one of the students, who had had a year in the subject in another school, asked for a class in second-year Greek I persuaded her to choose Latin instead. Of course, she never suspected that the real reason for the suggestion was the fact that the teacher, optimistic though he was, did not quite dare to teach second-year Greek with only eight weeks' preparation on the whole subject.

During the winter of this year our family circle was further broken up by the death of my sister Martha. She was a sweet, gentle-spirited girl of just eighteen summers. She had been sick all through the fall, but her death was sudden and unexpected. Her sudden passing away, coming just when it did, as we were beginning to recover from the sense of the loss of my mother, was a great shock to all of us, but especially to my father and my sisters.

Long before the close of this school year I had decided to leave teaching and resume my studies again. Meager though my salary was, I had saved enough in the two years to pay my way through college for another year at least. I do not remember now just how and why I hit on the University of Illinois as the school of my choice; because it was near my home, I presume. I decided to specialize in English and languages. At the close of my regular year at the institute I was prevailed upon by the secretary to remain for a summer session of ten weeks. Since Principal Byers was to leave for further study during the summer, I was appointed principal of the summer session. The honor was an empty one, however. It carried with it no extra remuneration; and since there was but one other teacher, not much of prestige. The only compensation was the privilege of teaching such subjects in the curriculum as the other instructors could not or would not undertake. The assortment of subjects that fell to my lot, some six or seven, embraced a wide variety—physics, botany, Latin, history, pedagogy, and psychology—several of which I knew very little about. One I had never studied in school before. But that was no reason why I should hesitate to teach it in those days. Humility was not one of our outstanding virtues as pioneer teachers at the institute, and could not be.

The subject I knew least about, perhaps, was pedagogy. I had never studied it except in Page's *Theory and Practise,* an old-time authority I had once read through in preparation for a teacher's country school examination. Being very young, I had no extended experience to draw from in my teaching in this field. One day while conducting a small class in this particular subject, a grey-headed and bearded elderly man, well dressed, rather distinguished looking, stepped into my room. Thinking him a casual visitor from the city, I offered him a seat and continued unconcerned with my discussion. I was using an old out-of-date textbook, White's *Pedagogy.* Since my knowledge was limited to what was in the text, the recitation period was about as dry and uninspiring as one might expect under the circumstances. But not suspecting my visitor to be an expert in the field, I was not disturbed. Imagine my surprise and chagrin when I learned after the class that the stranger was the superintendent of schools of the city of Minneapolis. He was visiting friends in Elkhart; and, learning that there was a summer school for teachers in the city, he decided to pay the institution a visit. His later comments to his friends of this visit to a class in the art of teaching in a summer school presided over by a green boy teacher who based his instruction on a text that had been out-of-date for a whole generation must have been very interesting.

At the close of the summer session I was prevailed on by the treasurer of the institute, a young businessman originally from

Wayne County, Ohio, who evidently went on the theory that the institute teachers should pay their own salaries, to accept as part pay for my summer's work a finely engraved stock certificate of the association. That left me about enough cash to settle for my board and other expenses of the session. Even though the pioneer efforts of the teachers at the institute may have been somewhat immature and primitive, no one can deny that they earned their salary.

14

Finding a Life Work

I ENTERED THE University of Illinois in the fall of 1900 as a conditioned freshman. Most of the courses I had taken at Normal were too elementary even to count for entrance requirements; and since my high school course also was irregular, I lacked a number of the required subjects for entrance to the freshman class. These deficiencies I now had to make up in some manner. One course I took in the preparatory department which the university still maintained in the basement of what was then the main building for just such students as I. The others I made up by special examinations during the fall months. And so, by the close of the first semester, I had not only worked off all my conditions, but had accumulated several college credits in my favor as well.

I was soon impressed with the fact that the whole academic and social atmosphere of the university was in striking contrast to that of the normal school. In the former there was an atmosphere of scholarship and a sense of freedom, entirely lacking in the latter, and a feeling of intellectual comradeship between professor and student instead of the schoolmaster attitude. At Champaign the student was regarded as a man; at Normal he was still a schoolboy. I was especially fortunate in the selection of my professors. Dr. Moss, of the Greek Department, was not only an inspiring teacher, but a fine Christian gentleman as well and a warm friend to all his students. He frequently invited us to his home where we had the pleasure of meeting his fine family, including a devoted wife, a charming daughter, and a companionable son. Dr. Green, head of the History Department, an absent-minded bachelor whose father had been a pioneer missionary to Japan, was a fine-spirited man and a thorough scholar. Dr. Dodge, a tall, gaunt, curly-headed and bewhiskered specialist in Anglo-Saxon and early English studies, was a favorite among his students. Studying under these fine teachers and sympathetic leaders was not a tedious task, but a privilege and a pleasure.

But I must frankly confess that even under these most favorable and pleasant conditions, I was still haunted by an unquenchable longing to rush through my course and complete my education. Academic halls still seemed more or less like prison walls. Because of the necessity of spending several years between my school periods in teaching, I was already somewhat above the average freshman age. I was in a hurry to catch up. Every evening as my roommate, Lloyd Engel, and I walked downtown, the flow of conversation would inevitably turn to counting the days to Thanksgiving, then to Christmas, and after the holidays to the end of the semester, and finally to the end of the year.

I took advantage of every possible means of shortening my course. I carried the maximum number of hours permitted by petition to the faculty; I studied during the Christmas holidays and other vacation periods, preparing for outside credits by examination; I attended summer sessions. In fact, I took neither holiday nor vacation from the hour I entered the university until the day I left.

It is needless to say, of course, that this was all a big mistake. I did not see it then, but I do now. Education is more than a cramming of a certain number of specified courses. It is a developing process that requires time. And time, to me, seemed very valuable. Because of lack of it, I passed by numerous opportunities for accumulating the general culture and training which is essential to a well-rounded education; and which, to me in particular, would have been of inestimable value in later life. One of these opportunities was an invitation to join a leading fraternity of the university. No doubt, there are many valid arguments against college fraternities. They are inclined to be undemocratic, often foster a spirit of snobbishness, and do not always promote the best traditions of the university. To some students, no doubt, they are a positive detriment; to others, they are at best unnecessary; but to me, at that time, the social contacts made possible by a good fraternity would have been of considerable benefit. I did, however, take time to join several organizations: the Glee Club and the Y.M.C.A.

The Glee Club made a short tour this winter through the central part of the state, including Normal, where I had the pleasure of appearing in my first dress suit before a large audience of students and former teachers, in one of the numbers of their regular lecture course. I felt quite important and happy when after the program I met a number of my former schoolmasters, not as a schoolboy now, but as a student from the state university.

It was but natural, of course, that I should join the Y.M.C.A. At the end of the year I was elected vice-president, and chairman of the Bible Study Committee, an important position in the organization, since we were rated as one of the strongest associations in the country at that time, with perhaps the largest number of students taking Bible study, some nine hundred, of any of the universities. I again attended Geneva the following summer with great benefit to myself. My connections at Champaign with the Y.M.C.A. I regard as one of the most valuable experiences of my student life. The literary societies of the university were not strong, and I do not believe that my connections with the Adelphian Society added much to my education, although the fault was entirely my own.

One other experience during the first weeks of that first semester I remember distinctly—my petition to the faculty to be excused from military training on the grounds of conscientious scruples. Then, as now, military drill was compulsory in all state universities. I was a Mennonite. Mennonites, like the Quakers, believe that love is a more potent solvent of social misunderstandings than hate, that force can never settle any problem affecting the relations of normal human beings, and that peace is always to be preferred to war among the nations of the world. Mennonites believe this so thoroughly that they have given this belief the sanction of a religious doctrine as essential and sacred as any other in their creed. Of all the religious principles which distinguish Mennonites from other Protestant groups I have always respected this as the most fundamental and one which it seemed to me was grounded on sound logic and correct social philosophy as well as on Scripture. It is the one bit of Mennonitism which remains longest with those Mennonites who, for some reason or another, have departed from their early faith for other associations and affiliations.

Believing as I did that the war system was all wrong, I saw no consistency in drilling for war. I accordingly petitioned the faculty for release from this part of the university course, stating my reason for the request. It was, undoubtedly, an unusual and peculiar request. I was told afterward that only once before had a similar favor been requested, and that by a Quaker student. It, evidently, was a question to be decided only by the highest university authorities, for I was sent to both the commanding officer in charge of the training, Major Fechet, and to President Draper. To my surprise, both the president and the major gave me a most courteous and sympathetic hearing. The major, especially, was most considerate and readily agreed that there should be the greatest freedom of conscience in this as in all other matters. This was in 1900, two years after the Spanish-American War. I doubt whether a similar request would have been so readily granted in 1920, after another war.

I remained at Champaign for two years. By the end of the first I had worked off all my conditions and was somewhat ahead of the schedule. At the close of the second, with summer work and with the aid of such scattered extra credits as I could gather from Ann Arbor and Normal, I was almost able to finish the requirements for an A.B. degree. I was short only a few credits which could be secured in another summer session. Keeping this explanation in mind, I perhaps did not stray far from the literal truth when I told a friend some years later that I entered the university as a subfreshman one academic year, and finished the A.B. degree course at the close of the next.

In spite of my rush through the curriculum, whatever I may have lost by it, poor grades were not one of the evil consequences. From the records which I have before me now, I find that none of my grades was below ninety, and none above ninety-seven; an evidence that I was not a genius in any subject, and that I owed whatever results I obtained to consistent, uniform hard work.

The faculty, evidently, was satisfied with my work; for when several years later a Phi Beta Kappa chapter was introduced in the university and the faculty was obliged to select candidates from all the earlier classes for membership, to my surprise I was included in a list of seven selections from the class of 1903, which numbered, all told, several hundred. I was so dumbfounded at this unexpected honor that I immediately wrote the secretary of the local chapter, who had informed me of my selection, for further confirmation, suspecting that some mistake must have been made and that the honor must have been meant for some other Smith. But when she replied that the name on the list was actually my own, I ceased to protest for fear that they might actually discover the right person. I attended the initiatory exercises of the new members a few weeks later at Champaign and received my certificate of membership. Just why I was selected from among a list of several hundred, a number of whom were better students than I, I never dared ask. Whether I really deserved the honor is a question I have never been able to answer satisfactorily. In the meantime I am wearing the key.

Before the close of the year I had decided to continue my graduate study in the University of Chicago the following year. After floundering about in the field of the languages and later in English, I had finally decided on history as my special interest for graduate work. The faculty agreeing to apply my summer credits to the A.B. degree, I entered Chicago for the summer session.

The University of Chicago at this time was still pretty much in the pioneer stage. Many of the spacious buildings that now grace the campus had existence only in President Harper's dream of what the university would some day be. On the day of my arrival, the spring convocation, I found that the commencement exercises, like a camp meeting, were being held in a big open tent. Nearby was a low, one-story, ramshackle brick structure with a flat roof which they said was the library. There was no gymnasium. In the broken string of big stone dormitories and recitation halls, which enclosed the quadrangular campus, there were many unfinished brick walls left for future additions. Within the quadrangle itself, in addition to the science group on the north side, there were only two buildings

—Haskel Museum and the geology building. Future sites were being used as tennis courts.

In the immediate vicinity of the campus everything still had the appearance of newness and incompleteness. The whole growth of this part of the city dated back only a few years to the time of the world's fair which had been housed along the Midway and Jackson Park nearby. Field Museum, the German building, and a few Japanese tea houses still remained here as relics of the big fair. Everywhere there were vacant lots and wide open spaces. The campus was flanked by the Midway and Washington and Jackson parks. South of Washington Park was located the Washington race track, where the last races were being held this very year. The site was becoming too valuable for a pleasure ground. My first rooming place was in a private home on Kimbark Avenue, just below Fifty-seventh Street. Hardly a block away there stood a big square house in the middle of a spacious open field which was enclosed by a high board fence —a future valuable building site, no doubt. In one corner of this open space, nearest my rooming house, there was a low sprawling, farm-like building, evidently a big chicken house, and a cow barn. Each morning my country heart was thrilled with the familiar and welcome music of cackling hens and the bawling of a calf just weaned.

Young as it was, however, the University of Chicago was already one of the largest and the best of the graduate schools of the country. Although it had just recently lost some of its world renowned scholars from its faculty, such men as the scientist Jacques Loeb and the German historian von Holst, enough notable scholars remained to give the university a high standing—such men as Dr. Jameson, the historian; Dr. Small, the sociologist, and scientists Chamberlain, Coulter, and Michelson. Being sponsored by John D. Rockefeller, and directed by the masterly hand of President Harper, it had unlimited means for securing good men. Its growth was rapid and its future amply assured.

My first summer was devoted entirely to undergraduate studies, which I still needed to finish my A.B. work at the University of Illinois. I did not begin my graduate work until the fall term. In the meantime I had submitted my Illinois credits for admission to candidacy for the master's degree in the graduate school. It was here that for the first time I learned of the disadvantages of rushing through a college course in less than the regulation time. When I submitted my credentials and credits to the registrar, he noticed that I had been in residence at Champaign only two calendar years. His immediate conclusion was that in two years one can finish only one half of a four-years course; and he forthwith reduced my credits from thirty-six, the number required for admission to the graduate school, to eighteen. The fact that I had finished my work at Illinois for the A.B. degree and would be granted that degree at the next commencement without any further study did not count. In vain I tried to point out to him that the two years included two summer sessions, that I had submitted advance credits from other institutions, and had taken some subjects by examination. I had credit for all of these—four years of work from the University of Illinois. But the registrar was impervious to either argument or explanation. He had already spent a trying day at his desk, fighting against the demands of scores of students for advanced standing, when I presented my case. He was not in a mood to listen to argument. He said he might concede that year for year the credits of Illinois were nearly as good as those of Chicago; but he was not willing to admit that I could do in two years in Illinois what would require four in Chicago. Naturally, as the argument proceeded, as arguments will, it became more earnest; and in my zeal to explain my case I entirely forgot that I was talking to the dignified registrar of the University of Chicago, and unconsciously dropped the language of polite academic intercourse for that of ordinary conversation. Unfortunately, through an unintentional slip of the tongue, I referred to the insistence on what to me seemed a mere technicality as a "quibble." That was the end. The tired registrar, thrusting aside my credentials, suggested that the interview might as well end; and it did.

I left the office deeply disappointed at the prospect of losing two full years of college credit in my pursuit of a higher degree. That night in my room I wrote the registrar a long letter in which I first of all apologized for the unfortunate expression; and secondly, I made a careful analysis and prepared a thorough statement of all the scholastic credits I had earned in the different schools I had attended. A few days later I received a reply from the office granting me thirty-two credits instead of the eighteen originally offered—just a few short of enough to qualify for admission to the graduate school. These I made up later in the year in connection with my regular work.

I spent a profitable year studying history and government under such teachers as Judson, who later succeeded Harper as president, Jameson, and Merriam. It was in the course of my studies at this time that I first became interested in a subject which later became my special field of investigation—Mennonite history. One day while casually leafing through a book on Baptist history in the library of the seminary I ran across the name of Menno Simons. A little investigation disclosed the fact that the author of the book claimed Menno Simons as one of the founders of the Baptist faith. Through further reading I found to my surprise that all Baptist historians claimed a common spiritual origin with the Mennonites in the Anabaptist movement of the early sixteenth century, as well as a direct descent through the Mennonite church in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth. Continued reading during the winter revealed the fact, to my increasing delight, that the Congregationalists, too, credited the Dutch Mennonite artisans and religious refugees who came to southeastern England all through the latter part of the sixteenth century in considerable numbers as the source of the ideas of religious toleration from which the separatism of our own Pilgrim Fathers later developed.

To me this was a most interesting discovery. I had never known much of Mennonite origins. I had always thought of Mennonites as an obscure, peculiar people, with strange unpopular practices. A good, honest, and thrifty people, of course, but with little influence in the world, and with little bearing on the great currents of world movements. I never expected to find their deeds recorded in the books of either secular or religious history. To discover, therefore, that they were pioneers in the rise of religious toleration, and that they were the spiritual forefathers of both the Baptists and the Congregationalists, as well as the earliest of all modern peace societies, was a revelation to me as surprising as pleasing. My respect for the religion of my forefathers was greatly enhanced. I no longer needed to apologize for my humble faith. The real contribution of the Mennonites to the great cause of religious toleration and world peace ought to be given wider publicity, I thought. Before I left the university I had decided to make a thorough investigation of their history and, if possible, to write a comprehensive treatise on the subject for publication. And so I began a task which has not ended to this day.

Since the spring convocation the following year at Chicago was held a week earlier than the commencement exercises at Champaign, I actually received my master's degree before the bachelor's. The convocation exercises were again held in the big tent. In the procession from Cobb Hall to the tent I marched with a Mr. French, Idaho's lone Congressman, who had been a graduate student at the university during the preceding year. The commencement speaker was President Gilman of Johns Hopkins. The speaker had hardly begun his address when it began to rain. Soon it poured, and the water came down in sheets, breaking through the leaky old tent in streams. Suddenly there arose all over the vast audience a sea of umbrellas. But the graduates, dressed in their caps and gowns, without any protection whatever from the rain, were soon drenched to the skin. The speaker, after attempting a few remarks in which he suggested that this unusual deluge must undoubtedly be a special manifestation of divine approval on the heads of the Baptists, who did not believe in sprinkling but in immersion, beat a hasty retreat from the platform. After the storm the crowd dispersed. I hastened over to Haskel Museum where from a row of scrolls scattered about the floor in alphabetical order I picked out my own diploma. My A.B. degree diploma was mailed to me from Champaign several weeks later. I experienced but few of the usual commencement thrills in my first two graduations.

I had already been re-engaged to teach in the Elkhart Institute for the following year. This institution had now outgrown both its curriculum and its quarters at Elkhart and was to be removed to the neighboring city of Goshen, where by the addition of a two-year college course it was to start as a junior college under the name of Goshen College. I had been present early in June to participate in the ceremonies incident to the breaking of ground for a commodious building to be erected during the summer. In the absence of President Byers, who had not yet returned from Harvard where he had spent the year in graduate study, I was invited to deliver the address of the day. I was highly pleased with the new location of the proposed college campus on the southern outskirts of the city along the Elkhart River and looked forward with pleasant anticipation to an interesting year of work.

It was perhaps perfectly natural that by this time I should decide permanently on a teaching career. Graduate study in history hardly fitted one for anything else. And yet I must frankly confess I did not deliberately choose that profession. I drifted into it. I was not primarily interested in the technique of teaching. I do not know that I was consumed with a burning zeal to make myself useful in the world. I cannot say that I had an overweening ambition to do anything great or to be an active participant of any sort in the routine of world affairs. I had no ambition to be rich. In fact, I did not like the detailed routine activities of a workaday world. My main interest was to be a student, an observer of life rather than a participant in its varied activities, to know life, to acquire knowledge, to travel, to explore, to acquire experience, to develop an enriched personality. And since one must have a profession of some sort, I knew of none which would afford such opportunities for this kind of a life as that of teaching. Although I drifted into my life work, first as a secondary interest, but later as a final objective, I have been happy in it ever since and have never regretted the step. So far as I see now I would choose the same career again were I permitted the privilege of charting the course of my life work all over again.

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Goshen College Days

THE COLLEGE BUILDINGS at Goshen were far from ready for use when the time came for the opening of school in September. The walls of the main building were hardly more than halfway up. The girls' dormitory, however, which was the first building to be erected, was sufficiently near completion to permit the use of the lower floor for recitation purposes. This building, together with one of the churches in Parkside, served as recitation rooms until far into the winter, when classes moved over into the main hall and the girls deserted their downtown residences for their own home. The curriculum, like the buildings, remained incomplete for some time—only two of the four years of the college course were given at first. It was hoped, however, that within a few years the institution might become a full-fledged college, as it actually did some time later.

Our teaching staff consisted of ten members—with one exception, all young men and women under thirty. The college was more fortunate in this respect than most denominational schools. It had on its faculty no superannuated ministers nor outworn church workers. These young men were all fresh from college themselves, from such schools as Harvard, Northwestern, Chicago, Oberlin, and the University of Illinois. They had not yet outgrown their youthful enthusiasms. They were still eager students themselves and, consequently, inspiring teachers, all of which had its influence on student ideals and purposes.

I doubt whether there was another college in the entire land of the youth and small student body of Goshen which sent such a large portion of its students into higher fields of learning. During the few years I was connected with the institution a large number of the students continued their advanced studies in the large universities, and many of them finally took their Ph.D. degrees. With but few exceptions they all made good in their various lines of life work. A full dozen of the boys whom it was my pleasure to have in my classes during these few years are today holding honored positions as professors in as many leading universities and colleges. Some became leading doctors; others lawyers; some became successful businessmen; several are preachers; a number of them missionaries. One is now serving as attorney-general of his native state; another is the mayor of one of the state capitals; still another is holding a prominent government position at Washington. All are men and women of influence in their respective communities.

The pleasure of watching the evolution of green, awkward country boys and girls into young men and women of culture and influence in the affairs of the world is one of the compensations for the small pay and hard work involved in educational pioneering. One of the boys I remember came from a conservative Mennonite community in Pennsylvania, religiously wearing a "plain" coat and a rubber collar without a tie. Today he is head of the music department in a well-known eastern college. Another similarly attired is today a captain of industry, having amassed in the meantime, by his own efforts, a fortune well beyond the million mark. An Amish boy from a western state who came with hooks and eyes and long hair is today a popular English professor in one of the oldest state universities. It is from illustrations such as these that one draws his justification for the small denominational college.

Of course, these young men and women might have done equally well had they begun their education in any other institution. Be that as it may, this at least is true: Without the existence of Goshen College many of these Mennonite young people would never have had the opportunity or occasion for even starting out on an educational career; and herein lies the best excuse for the small denominational school. Every college is at best rather a community affair. Investigation shows that from the youngest to the oldest, from the most obscure to the most famous, from Goshen to Harvard, over half of the student body comes from within a radius of fifty miles or less. Those coming from a distance make up but a small part of the entire student body and represent either the sons and daughters of alumni or members of the church constituency supporting the institution.

It is not the main function of the small college to develop productive scholarship. That is the business of the big university, the experiment station, and the specialized laboratory. Our experts in science and politics already know enough to greatly promote human progress in many directions if only the proper social co-operation could be secured to apply the knowledge we already have. The function of the small college is to distribute among the masses the necessary enlightenment; and to dispel the ignorance which makes progress impossible. The denominational institution, especially, is in a position to reach many of its own group who could not be touched by any other agency. Those who are inclined to belittle the place of the small school in our educational system do not sufficiently take this function into consideration.

And so, even though our laboratories were meager, and our library during the first few months consisted of only one row of books on a single shelf across the back end of one of the recitation rooms, by offering numerous eager young men and women a chance to develop a taste for an education who otherwise might never have had their intellectual interests aroused, this seemed to us ample justification for our existence as an educational institution with college ambitions.

The financial burdens of the school bore heavily on the shoulders of the few men who had the courage to undertake the task. Chief of these was the secretary, J. S. Hartzler, who gave the best years of his life to the cause. The business manager was the same short, fat, thrifty Pennsylvania Dutchman, C. K. Hostetler, who several years earlier had induced me to accept a nicely engraved stock certificate of the old Elkhart Institute, now defunct, as a substantial share of my summer salary. To him was entrusted the unpleasant task of meeting all the daily routine bills that became due. But he was equal to the occasion. One means of income was from an occasional sale of a building lot from a large tract of land surrounding the campus which the city of Goshen had donated as an inducement to bring the school from Elkhart. These lots kept the college afloat during the first lean years until a more substantial endowment could be raised. It did not take so much then as now to meet running expenses. No one got much money at Goshen. Even the president received less than one thousand dollars in salary at this time. My work was pleasant, however, and I enjoyed it to the limit. Before I knew it the summer vacation had arrived.

A part of this summer I decided to spend in travel. It was the year of the St. Louis Fair; and I included a visit to that attraction in my vacation program. The (Old) Mennonites at that time were still firmly set against all forms of "worldly" amusements. The World's Fair, especially, was a veritable den of iniquity. State and district conferences had passed strong resolutions urging their members not to attend. When the local elder of my home congregation, of which I was still a member, heard of my plans he gently reminded me of these recommendations. His final argument, one usually regarded as a test to be applied to all questionable cases of human conduct, was this: If you knew that you were to meet with a serious accident on the way to St. Louis, and perhaps to lose your life, would your conscience permit you to go? I replied that I was going not to gratify "the lusts of the flesh" and "the pride of life," but as an educator to learn of the ways of the world. As for my conscience, while I was not anxious to die under any circumstances, I thought I could die with a clear conscience if I should be so unfortunate as to meet with a serious accident on the way. This seemed to satisfy him, inasmuch as conscience seemed a safe guide in all matters of daily living. But a few days later I was not so sure but that I had better have taken his advice. The Chicago-Alton on which I was a passenger was wrecked about twenty miles south of Peoria, and we left one man dead, though the rest of us were not seriously hurt. I have attended a number of World Fairs since, and I am not at all convinced that the old elder was wrong in his contention that there is altogether too much iniquity connected with the side shows that make up entirely too large a part of all World Fairs.

The fair itself, although a financial failure, I believe was regarded an educational success. I, no doubt, enjoyed all the educational features; but if I did, I have forgotten them. What I remember most clearly was a new brand of coffee that was being widely advertised and freely distributed all over the grounds, a Philippine Island exhibit, a sham battle representing an actual engagement in the recent Boer War, the ferris wheel, and the amusement section called the Pike.

The Pike was a fraud. The exhibitors, expecting a new list of suckers each day, did not fear adverse advertising. They caught both the unsuspecting and the sensation seekers. Highly sensational or attractive promises outside were matched with very tame or disappointing performance inside—all but Paines fireworks which was worth the price of admission. The Boer War was a realistic reproduction of an actual historical occurrence still fresh in the memories of everybody. Each afternoon and evening the thunders of the guns could be heard all over the grounds, and the smoke of battle could be seen rising high above the western horizon. The actors in this make-believe fight were all men who had actually participated in the real thing. The two most conspicuous incidents of this sham battle after the smoke had cleared away were the march of a corps of Scotch bag pipers carrying their wounded comrades off the battlefield and the daring escape of the Boer General de Wet from his pursuers as, mounted on his horse, he slid down a steep hillside into a river and swam across to safety on the other side under a rain of rifle bullets. In the make-believe escape a sliding chute and a big water tank served for the hillside and the river.

The Philippine exhibit consisted, among other items, of two villages of Moros and Igorots. The Moro war dances were quite similar to our own Indian dances except that the spear replaced the tomahawk. The Igorots, who were said to be the least civilized of all the tribes in the islands, were corraled within a high stockade, where large crowds daily watched the naked savages in their primitive huts as they went about their daily tasks. Their favorite dishes were said to be dog meat and caterpillars which they ate with their fingers out of large bowls which had been set on improvised fireplaces near their dwellings. I was not greatly impressed by this first acquaintance with the newest acquisition to our national family.

Soon after my return from St. Louis I started out on my first trip to the Rocky Mountains. For years I had dreamed of seeing the West, but up to this time I had not been able to make my dream come true. As a boy I devoured with interest all the reading matter I could find on the western prairies and their inhabitants. The prairies I had always visualized as a broad expanse of treeless plains, with tall waving grass, uninhabited save by occasional herds of buffalo, lonely coyotes, casual bands of redskins, and perhaps an occasional trapper or hunter. It was the West of Buffalo Bill and of Frank Reade, inventor of the electric man and the steam horse, that I cherished—a boy's West. I was interested not only in the plainsmen but in the plains themselves, with all their possibilities for adventure.

It was with the fondest anticipations, therefore, of at last realizing a long dreamed of boyish hope, that I left Chicago one summer evening on the Sunset Limited of the Rock Island system bound for Denver.

The next morning I woke up somewhere in southeastern Nebraska. By noon we had crossed the Kansas line, and all afternoon we traveled across the northwestern corner of the Sunflower State. The Rock Island crosses what was at that time, no doubt, still the most typical stretch of the Old West to be found along any of our railroads. The long stretches of rolling prairie reaching to the horizon in every direction, unfenced, with wandering trails for roads, dotted here and there with large herds of white-faced cattle; occasional prairie dog villages guarded by faithful sentinels sitting upright on their little mounds of sand; almost no human habitations except in the small, scattered, treeless, prairie villages—all this was almost what I had expected it to be.

I say almost. There were a few disappointments. I did not know the short-grass country. I looked for long prairie grass and perhaps an occasional prairie fire. The settlers' shacks, though few and lonely, were still too numerous. There were no Indians in sight. I would have preferred the buffalo to the grazing cattle, though I had not expected that. In the main I was satisfied, and it was with the greatest pleasure that I watched the passing landscape through the car window, as the train rushed toward the Colorado border.

Later in the afternoon as we were speeding across the plains of eastern Colorado about fifty miles from Denver, I caught my first glimpse of the mountains. What I first took to be a low bank of clouds along the western horizon I was told were the foothills of the Rockies. There are some thrills that are never quite duplicated; one of these is the first sight of a mountain.

It was with the keenest interest that I watched these foothills grow into gigantic upheavals of rock and earth as we approached them.

I spent a whole blessed week about Denver and its environs. I drove through the Garden of the Gods, marveling as much at the fertile imagination of the guide, who saw some well-known animal in every bit of fantastic sandstone structure scattered throughout the garden, as at the beauties of the place itself. I took the trip to Cripple Creek, which had hardly yet outlived its recent reputation as the most lawless of western mining camps. I rode over the Moffat route, one hundred miles of which had been completed by this time, through tunnels innumerable, back and forth along the mountainsides, as we slowly climbed out of the valley to the watershed above. It was years before this short cut to the Oregon country was completed; and then only after repeated financial failures on the part of the original promoters.

But the greatest thrill of all was the ascent up Pikes Peak on the cog railway. To me the view from the top of the peak was wonderful. We were high above the timber line, great boulders lying about in every direction; in the distance, peak after peak as far as the eye could see, separated by deep gullies and valleys. Here and there, on the shaded side of some crag far out of reach of the sun, pockets of perpetual snow could be seen. We seemed to be standing on the top of the world. On the very crest, on a boulder, we read on a bronze plate the information that Zebulon Pike and his band of hardy explorers were the first white men to view the world from this lofty spot in 1806.

Off to the north, more than fifty miles away, under a blue haze of smoke, we were told, lay the city of Denver. To the southwest was Cripple Creek. West and north, towering above his neighbors, appeared Longs Peak. To the east far below, along the foot of the range, nestled Colorado Springs, a rectangular garden patch of green hardly larger than a good-sized meadow lot. I have climbed a number of mountains since that first ascent up Pikes Peak, but never again did I enjoy quite such a thrill.

I spent the remainder of the summer at Elkhart doing research in Mennonite history in the library of John F. Funk, for I had decided now to begin on my chosen field of investigation.

Funk in the course of years had gathered what was undoubtedly the most complete collection in America of books and pamphlets dealing with various phases of Mennonite history. This collection he very kindly placed at my disposal. I spent several summers here and later made good use of the facts gathered in my investigations.

My second year at Goshen was as pleasant as the first had been. In fact, teaching favorite subjects like history to eager and interested students of mature age and serious purpose was not a task at all, but rather a delightful privilege, the kind of thing one would wish to do even though he were not paid for it. I am speaking of college teaching, of course, not high school, which might be an entirely different story.

Our social life, also, was enjoyable. My fellow teachers were an agreeable group. The students, too, many of whom were nearly my own age and of like interests. The spirit of comradeship between student and teacher was unusually pleasant. There were no intercollegiate athletics, but much outdoor recreation. Boating parties on the Elkhart River in the spring and autumn, and skating and sleighing parties in winter.

I had a pleasant home with the president of the school; and for that reason was frequently in closer touch with the inside policies of the institution than some of the other members of the faculty. Many of the school projects and administrative reforms that were introduced from time to time were first discussed over the coffee cups at President Byers' breakfast table. One of these, the organization of an intercollegiate peace oratorical league, spread into other schools and states until finally it included most of the Midwest states. For some years this organization did valuable service in the cause of peace among college students. Then came the war, which made peace talk unpopular. The association was finally suspended and was revived only recently.

On one point of Byers' program we disagreed at the time, and I believe that later developments proved the correctness of my position. Believing that a closer co-operation between the school and the official leaders of the church would enlist a warmer interest and a heartier support from the church at large than had been the case heretofore, President Byers advocated and later secured a reorganization of the board of trustees which permitted members to be elected by the various church conferences instead of by a school association. This arrangement in course of time placed the school at the mercy of the church officials, many of whom were still ultraconservative and not as yet enthusiastic about the question of higher education for their young people. For a while few conferences availed themselves of this opportunity. In the hope of creating a deeper interest in the institution the board itself often selected representatives from the church at large who were but slightly in favor of college training and few of whom had even the equivalent of a good country-school education. Nearly all were farmers; none were competent to guide wisely the course of an educational institution.

Higher education developed among the (Old) Mennonites with a rush; and the old leaders could not keep up with the procession. There was a wide gap, therefore, between the Harvard and Chicago graduates on the faculty attempting to make Goshen a progressive college abreast of the times and the board of farmer preachers who were afraid to let go of the old traditions. When it finally dawned on the church leaders that the college was here to stay, they elected members of their own choice to the board, placed a conservative president at the head of the school, who was not an educator; finally dismissed the entire faculty; then closed the college for a year, to resurrect it again with a program in keeping with their own ideals.

But all this was still in the future. In my day the board was still a self-perpetuating body of progressive men who, though not educators themselves, had the good judgment to leave all educational problems to the good sense of the faculty. The faculty still had the full confidence of the board. There were no inquisitorial committees to sit in judgment on the views of the science teacher; there was no censorship of the books that went into the library. One such committee, to be sure, of self-appointed preachers had actually undertaken this task some years before at Elkhart; and it was surprising with what uncanny accuracy they were able to smell out the unsavory books in the library, although they may never have heard of the titles they ruled out. Two of the rejected books I remember especially well—*Tristam Shandy* and *The Luck of Roaring Camp,* both of which went to enrich the private collection of the librarian. The curriculum thus was as progressive and broad as that of any small college in the country, perhaps more so than many another church school run by superannuated preachers, with the result that an unusually large number of graduates were inspired to continue their advanced studies with most satisfactory results as already indicated.

But if the board of trustees was inclined to grant us the greatest possible liberty to formulate our educational policies as we thought best, the local Indiana church conference was not so agreed. This conference was one of the most conservative in the entire denomination. The church must still be made up of a "peculiar" and "separate" people. All forms of worldly amusements were still carefully guarded against by the good brethren. I arrived at church one Sunday morning just in time to hear President Byers confess to the meeting for the sin of judging an educational exhibit at the county fair the week before.

At the close of my second year at Goshen I decided to reenter Chicago to finish my work for the Ph.D. degree. I was nearly out of debt again, but did not have a cent toward my further university expenses. My father, however, who had become thoroughly reconciled by this time to my educational career and had implicit faith in my judgment as to what was best for me, promised to furnish me with whatever money I might need to complete my work.

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Educational Trail's End

I LIMITED MYSELF during these last two years of graduate study entirely to my chosen field of investigation—history. I had decided on "The Mennonites of America" as the title of my doctor's thesis. As a suitable background for this study I selected church history as a minor, which was offered, not in the university, of course, but in the closely affiliated divinity school.

I soon began to reap the results of my special study at Elkhart during the preceding summer. The field of Anabaptist history was little known and but slightly cultivated even in a Baptist institution like Chicago. My brief investigation of a few months in sources not found in the university libraries and unknown among the history professors enabled me to speak with some authority on the subject.

Fortunately for me, for some reason or other now no longer remembered, I was invited quite early in the fall term to prepare a paper for the History Club, which was composed of the graduate students and faculty of the department. This gave me an opportunity to present the results of my special studies. The faculty, unaware that I had spent months in studying this special field and thinking, perhaps, that my presentation at the club was the work of only a few weeks of casual preparation, seemingly were well impressed with my effort. At the next meeting of the club I was elected its president. It never rains but it pours, they say. Not long after this there happened to be a vacancy in a history fellowship. When the new appointment was to be made I had become a logical candidate for the position. This fellowship I retained for the two remaining years of my university course. The few summer months I had spent in John Funk's library were by no means wasted.

The other two holders of historical fellowships during these two years were M. M. Quaife, later well-known historian and writer on matters pertaining to the history of the region about the Great Lakes; and Clarence Dykstra, former popular city manager of the city of Cincinnati, later appointed by President Roosevelt the first director of the Selective Service Act, and finally, successively president of the University of Wisconsin and the University of California at Los Angeles.

These university fellowships, in addition to the scholastic prestige and the modest stipend that went with them, involved a small amount of assistance to the professors. I was assigned to Professor Terry's history class. Professor Terry by this time had reached that stage in his career where he no longer looked forward to advancement. He was well along in years and had written a big fat textbook on English history. Evidently he proposed to take life easy for the rest of his academic days. In this particular class his lectures consisted largely of readings from the manuscripts which had served as copy some years before for his printed book. The information gleaned by the students from the lecture platform was identical with what they would have gained more comfortably from a reading of the text in their study rooms. In fact, those of us who knew the professor best were inclined to the belief that he was somewhat indisposed to unnecessary mental exertion, to use a rather cumbersome phrase for stating a fact that could be expressed more vigorously, but less politely, by a single word. My own work included the correcting of test papers. As the test days increased in frequency, my conviction grew that we were not far mistaken in our estimate of his inclinations. When we had tests there were no lectures. Evidently the professor was determined that I should earn my three hundred dollars.

I took several courses under Doctor Thompson, perhaps the most scholarly professor in the department, and a year in French Revolution under Professor Schwill, who was a most delightful lecturer. Dr. Schwill who, judging from his name and his birth place, Cincinnati, evidently was of German extraction, yet was master of a beautiful English that almost approached literary quality. He, seemingly, became ashamed of his name later on; perhaps it was the late war that made him want to hide it. At any rate in a recent book of his he writes himself Schevill, instead of the Schwill I knew as a student some twenty years ago. The most popular of the history professors, however, was Andrew McLaughlin, head of the department. "Andy Mac" we called him—among ourselves, of course—ample proof of his popularity, for no ordinary professional man goes by a nickname. He came from Ann Arbor; and, as son-in-law of President Angell of Michigan, he was prominently mentioned as Angell's successor for a time, but he remained in Chicago. He was extremely democratic and approachable, always willing to help. Most of my work was under his sympathetic direction.

Whatever time I could spare from my regular class work I devoted to research on my thesis. Source material, however, in my field was meager. There was practically neither literature nor documents on the American Mennonites. They kept few records of their church life and of their family affairs. They were largely a rural people, with little interest in the political and social questions of their day. The fact that they were the very first German settlers in America was the only thing that saved their history from complete oblivion. Because of their pioneering they were given some attention by German-American historians. Governor Pennypacker of Pennsylvania, himself of Mennonite descent and somewhat of a local historian, had made some investigation in the field of Mennonite affairs. The published result of his research was almost the only printed source of information; even that was brief and unorganized. The Pennsylvania German Society's published reports contained an occasional Mennonite item. These scattered notices, together with local county and family histories, and certain colonial records of Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia furnished the only sources from which I was obliged to dig out such bits of information as I discovered about the colonial Mennonites.

This process of chasing down isolated facts was not very different from the proverbial hunting for a needle in a haystack. The sum total of information gathered was meager; but the hunt was not altogether without interest. Man is by nature an explorer, a hunter, and a gambler. He is content to spend hours and even days, if necessary, in pursuit of his game, valueless though the object of his hunt may be, just for the sheer pleasure of bagging it in the end. To me the pleasure of running down an elusive fact was as great as the capturing of big game to the hunter; not so exciting and dangerous, perhaps, but to me just as interesting and perhaps more profitable.

The life of a scholar may be a lonely one, even in the presence of a world of busy people. I devoted myself exclusively to my work. I took little part in outside university activities; I met few people in a social capacity; I made few friends. But in Orie Yoder, a medical student, a few years younger than I, I found a most delightful companion for the next two years. Orie had once been a student at the old Elkhart Institute, though not when I was there, consequently we had much in common to talk about. Each evening during these two years, for an hour or two, sometimes before supper and sometimes after, we took a long stroll together, generally along the lake front in Jackson Park, discussing our mutual friends or planning our careers.

Orie had a superb gift of gab and was an accomplished conversationalist. He liked nothing better than to talk. One evening we were visited by a mutual friend, Jonathan Kurtz by name, a teacher at Goshen College. It was arranged that "Yony," as we called him, should remain with me for the night at Snell Hall. Orie came over after supper, and for several hours we had a most enjoyable time discussing our old friends and talking over our common experiences. By eleven o'clock I began to get somewhat drowsy and to lose interest in further conversation. By twelve I had thrown myself across my bed and dropped out of the talk fest, hoping that Orie would take the hint and go home; but he did not. He kept on talking. I finally fell asleep, only to suddenly awake about three o'clock in the morning just in time to catch the farewell words, "Well, Yony, I am glad we could have this short visit. I'll be back in the morning and we can finish our talk." A few hours later he was back to take up the broken thread of conversation where he had left off.

Orie is now a prominent and successful physician in a Midwestern town. I meet him occasionally when I visit his part of the state. And when I do I invariably ask, "Well, doctor, do you remember the short talk you and Yony had in my room in Snell Hall?" He always remembers.

My brother Joe also paid me a visit during the spring of this year. After showing him about the campus, I brought him to my eight by fourteen room in Snell Hall. Joe had spent all his life on the farm and was accustomed to broad spaces and the boisterous sounds of the pig pen and the chicken yard, to say nothing of the cheerful music of a houseful of lusty youngsters. He never could have become reconciled to the quiet, dreary routine of the life of a student penned up within the four walls of a single small room. "Henry, I don't believe I would like this kind of a life. It is too quiet. I like action. I like to hear squealing pigs and bawling calves. I'd go crazy here." Before leaving he reached into his pocket and gave me a five-dollar bill. Not that I needed the money particularly, but it was his way of expressing his sympathy for me because of the dreary life he thought I was leading. Generous old Joe, with a heart as big as the broad spaces of his farm, the first to respond to every neighborhood need, the first to be called on in every community enterprise.

It was for the purpose of seeking a bit of relief from the daily routine of the classroom and the musty old books of the library stacks that I began to attend Grand Opera in the city during the winter season. But what began as a pastime developed into a passion. I learned to like opera for its own sake; and, in the course of my two years in the university, I heard nearly all the great stars, both European and American, in the operatic world; for at that time the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York still visited Chicago for an extended season each spring. Caruso, the deReskes, Bispham, Schumann-Heink, Calve, Sembrick, Nordica, Eames, Neilson, Tettracini—what a riot of heavenly music these names suggest. From the time the curtain rose until it fell, all too soon, my head was in the clouds; and I lived in a make-believe world where neither books nor examinations nor anything earthly counted; but with the dropping of the curtain I came back to earth with a deep sense of regret, realizing that it was all but a pleasant dream, leaving a trail of heavenly influence, nevertheless, that sweetened the routine tasks for many a day afterward.

Other opera companies also frequently appeared, giving some of the lighter works such as "Martha," "Bohemian Girl," and others in English. Among these was the Castle Square Company from Boston, which usually appeared in the old Studebaker theater, where for twenty-five cents you could get standing room in "nigger heaven" near enough to the stage to get the full effect of both the acting and the music.

I also saw all the great actors during this period. This was still the day before legitimate acting was driven from the stage by the movies. I saw them all—Richard Mansfield, Walker Whiteside, Julia Marlowe, and E. H. Sothern, the Shakespeareans; Joe Jefferson in Rip Van Winkle; John Drew, David Warfield, Eleanor Duse, Minnie Fisk, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Edith Mattheson, and Ethel Barrymore. John Barrymore was just coming into notice, playing a minor role with his sister. These were the last generation of actors. They left no successors. Many of them are dead now; some tried the movies, but failed; a few succeeded; one or two have remained on the stage and can still be seen occasionally in the smaller places, carrying on a brave but futile fight to uphold the dignity of a once popular but now a vanishing profession. They are the last of their kind. Whether their kind shall ever appear again on the earth no one can tell.

That the two or three evenings each week which I spent in the cultivation of my artistic inclinations cut in rather heavily on my regular history studies is, of course, evident. But even though I learned a little less history, I believe that this deficiency was more than balanced by what I gained in appreciation of wider life interests. Students were not given their class grades at that time in Chicago unless they asked for them. I never called for mine. I never quite dared to face the possibility of a disappointment. I have always maintained that "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." And so I do not know to this day whether I passed my three years work in Chicago by a wide margin or by the skin of my teeth. A mere postage stamp would bring the information even yet, perhaps. But I have never had the heart to find out.

I spent the summer of 1906 in southeastern Pennsylvania and in Virginia among the Mennonites there, in the interests of my thesis. Lancaster County, the original nest of the Pennsylvania Mennonites and the home of more than twenty-five thousand of them today is, no doubt, one of the most charming as well as the most prosperous rural bits in all America. The well-tilled fields of corn and tobacco, without the sign of a weed anywhere, the whitewashed board fences, the substantial stone houses and capacious red barns full of well-groomed horses and well-fed cattle—everything spelled thrift and industry in every detail. For several weeks I enjoyed to the limit both the charm of the landscape and the fine hospitality of the good people; but I learned little history. The Mennonites here I found were not much interested in their ancestry. At least they had kept no records. Even the resting places of their dead were left unmarked for a full half hundred years after the first settlements in the early eighteenth century. Early records of their church life there were none whatever.

But in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, in the archives of the State Historical Society and in the Department of the Interior, I was able to gather further bits of information for use in my story. It was in the State Library that I first met a young fellow historian by the name of Albert Cook Myers, a Quaker, who had just begun his life task, a history of the life and works of William Penn. He proposed to make a thorough investigation of all the sources both here and in Europe which had any connection whatever with his subject. It was a big undertaking and would require years for its accomplishment. Being young, Myers was rich in time but poor in this world's wherewithal. His first task, therefore, was to collect a sufficient sum of money from wealthy interested Quakers with which to endow himself while pursuing his arduous task. Just twenty years later I again had occasion to spend several weeks in this library. I found my friend Myers still engaged on his life work. So far as I know the task has not yet been completed. Such is the price of scholarship. Few realize the years of toil and sacrifice that may lie back of a great book which can be read through in the course of a few hours.

From Philadelphia I went to New York, where in the public library I discovered a rare old book written by a Dutch Mennonite communist, Plockhoy by name, and published in England in 1659, in which was outlined the communistic scheme of social organization which was actually tried out a few years later by a group of Mennonites along the lower Delaware. I also discovered in certain ecclesiastical records here the fact that Dutch Mennonites had appeared on Long Island as early as 1643.

During my entire stay of a few days in New York I was possessed with a spirit of restlessness and a strange desire to return to Philadelphia which I was peculiarly at a loss to explain. But when I returned to the latter city, I understood the cause of my strange uneasiness. I found a telegram awaiting me from Joe with the information that my father had suddenly died and asking me to come home immediately. I found out later that Father had died on the very day I had left Philadelphia; and every effort had been made to locate me in New York both through the press and the police office. I have never been a great believer in mental telepathy or other similar mental and spiritual phenomena, and yet I cannot explain this strange coincidence on any other basis.

I arrived home the day after the funeral. Father had not yet passed out of his late prime at the time of his sudden departure. He was still in his early sixties. His death came as a surprise and shock to all his friends and neighbors, for he was always known to be of a strong and rugged constitution. His last day on earth was fittingly spent in doing good. After a busy afternoon spent in looking after the placing of a number of Chicago fresh-air children throughout the community, he retired late in the evening, apparently as well as ever and well satisfied with a good day's work. But he had scarcely touched his pillow when without a moment's warning he passed to his eternal reward.

My father's passing severed the last tie that bound me to what during all these years I had still called home. After the death of my mother he had married again and left the old homestead for a new home he had built a half mile farther down the road. Here I had visited him each year for a week or so; and this was always home to me. I had no other. One of the rooms upstairs in the new house was always spoken of as "Henry's room," where I kept my books and such other treasures as I had accumulated in my boyhood days.

Home was now no longer a magic word with power to attract me back year after year to the place of my birth and scenes of boyhood recollections, but merely a sweet memory. My visits back would become increasingly brief and rare.

In a few days I would go back East to continue my summer's work. But before doing so I wanted once more, and perhaps for the last time, to visit the old farm scenes that were most closely associated with my boyhood experiences. Many of the most conspicuous landmarks, of course, I had seen disappear with the passing years—the old cottonwoods and willows in the cowlots, the "crick" back of the barn, and the swallows, the "other" orchard, and the big cow barn which as boys we boasted was the largest in the township and would hold one hundred loads of hay. But in the obscure corners of the old homestead there might still be a nook here and there that had not changed, some spot where I might still recover a few bits of the glamour and romance of vanished boyhood days.

For the better part of a whole day I wandered over fields and meadows, every foot of which I had covered more than once back of the plow or the hayrake, and visited remote fence corners where I had often chased up a rabbit or surprised a flock of quail. But nowhere was I quite able to catch the spirit of the olden times. The farm had lost its romance. It, too, had changed. The old rail fence along the west pasture lot where I had hoped to enjoy again the thrill of finding the robin's nest and of hearing the cheery call of the bobwhite had been torn down and the pasture itself turned into a corn field. The rapid rise of land values during the closing years of the past century and the opening ones of the present was responsible for the removal of all wide fence boundaries and waste grass plots that might be put to more profitable use.

The tall hedgerows which had served from time immemorial as the south line fence, and which I remembered as a sanctuary for the thrush and the song sparrow had made way for the more practical but far less romantic barbwire fence; the slough, too, in the southwest forty, once filled with the happy gurgle of the red-winged blackbird perched jauntily on the top of the swinging cattail and the plaintive song of the plover heard clear and sweet across the fields, had been drained dry and was now a barren and weedless stubble field.

Everywhere there was evidence of improved farming. Weeds, sloughs, "cricks," tall, wasteful hedgerows, broad, straggling rail fences, and scattered locust groves had all disappeared; and with all these there vanished also much that I would have been glad to see and hear again—the tall slough grass and tiger lilies, and the sudden whir of the prairie hen as she shot into the air on the approach of a suspicious-looking intruder; and even the dismal evening croak of the bullfrog—sights and sounds indelibly associated in my mind with childhood recollections. On all sides there was suggestion of hard work; nowhere a reminder of the carefree happy playtime of boyhood. Only the meadow lark remained singing as sweetly as ever, seemingly more happy than usual now that he had all these broad spaces almost entirely to himself.

"I'll spend another day," I said, "in search of the land of long ago. Surely the hills and hollows along the old stage road to the Partridge church have not changed, and the big trees must still be there." But they weren't. The same increase in land values that caused the sloughs and creeks on the prairies to be dried up and the hedgerows to be grubbed out had also doomed the big trees in the timbered sections to the west of us. Even the thin timber soil was too valuable to let lie idle. And so, in my ten-mile ride along the familiar old angling church road, I found barren yellow clay knobs covered with scrawny corn rows and short, thin wheat shocks instead of the fine big elms and hickories which I remembered so well as the home of the timber squirrel and the blue jay on my way to the Partridge church.

Many of the old landmarks along the way, too, had disappeared. Engel's picturesque old log barn had been replaced by a new structure along modern lines, painted a bright red with white weather strips and topped with blue-balled lightning rods. The ancient road house at Hickory Point now rested some distance off the main road, serving as a pig stable instead of an oasis for quenching the thirst of weary travelers. The old Partridge meetinghouse, the objective of my day's wandering, had been abandoned for some years and had been sold to a neighboring farmer who had converted it into a wheat granary. The hitching racks where once long rows of friendly horses were wont to whinney back and forth their morning greetings, and the buggy sheds, once a refuge for men and boys grown tired of long sermons, were all gone. The green grass of the church yard had been plowed under. The old brick meetinghouse itself, with windows boarded over, now sat lonesome and deserted in the midst of an open field.

I returned that evening with a keen sense of disappointment. I felt that something had gone out of my life—something hauntingly beautiful and appealing; that I had come to a sharp turn in the trail of life; that, like the passing of the old landmarks, so too, the days of youth with all the happy associations of boyhood had come to an end; and home, so suggestive of family affection, such a refuge from the disappointments of life, was now but a fragrant memory. I felt like the mariner who had been cut loose from his moorings in a quiet harbor and had been set adrift on an uncertain and uncharted sea, not sure in which direction to steer his ship, but bent on seeking a new harbor somewhere. So I, too, must needs seek satisfactory anchorage in a new set of life interests and fix my affection on new life objectives.

It was in this mood that I returned to Virginia after a brief visit to the haunts of boyhood days to resume my historical investigations among the Mennonites of the Shenandoah Valley. My visit to this beautiful valley was a pleasant one. This was my first contact with the Southland. The word *South* had always had a peculiar fascination for me. It was full of the suggestion of magic and charm—bright blue skies, soft winds, green trees, beautiful women, gallant men, leisure, music, romance—the old South, pictured by the romancers of the prewar days. I first came under the spell of it all at Staunton, the most southern point of my visit during the summer. The old-fashioned, high-columned, antiquated little courthouse set back in a spacious yard that was shaded by big spreading elms; the Negroes leisurely driving their one-horse, two-wheeled carts down the unpaved, dusty main street; the colonnaded houses; Negro melodies coming across the back alley to my hotel on the lazy breeze of a quiet summer afternoon—all this was pregnant with suggestions of the real Southland as my imagination had pictured it.

At Harrisonburg, the center of a large Mennonite community, I ran across a typical southern gentleman of the old school—tall and distinguished looking as befitted the type, courteous and generous, but withal proud and punctilious, who, judging from his title, had been an officer in the Confederate Army—General John E. Roller. General Roller was now a prosperous and well-known attorney in this section of the state. Being of Pennsylvania-German extraction, he was interested in the history of his people and had collected what was then perhaps the largest private collection in the country of books in that particular field. I had had some correspondence with him relative to historical matters, and he had invited me to call on him when in his part of the state. But I had not thought of doing so until I happened to find myself in his town. Although he knew who I was and had heard of me through others because of the special historical research in which both of us were interested, he received me rather coldly at first because I had not thought of furnishing myself first with a letter of introduction. He thawed out sufficiently, however, to show me through his large collection of old books of Pennsylvania-German imprint. Although his library was of interest to the antiquarian, it was of little value to the historian.

I visited all the county seats in the valley where Mennonite settlements had been made, some of which had long become extinct. Everywhere I found that Mennonites had been pioneers, having arrived in the Shenandoah region with the very first group of Pennsylvania Germans to locate here.

Among other bits of information not directly connected with my subject, which I picked up here and there in the various courthouse records, most interesting were the transcriptions of land transfers to George Washington, the Fairfaxes, Lincolns, the Boones, and other well-known families in American history. It was either at Harrisonburg or at one of the other county seats that I incidentally ran across an item which did not impress me much at the time, but became of considerable interest to me later. As I recall the item now it was the record of the marriage of Abraham Lincoln, grandfather of the martyred president, to a Pennsylvania German girl by the name of Pennypacker. The Pennypackers were Mennonites. Some time later, when I had become interested in the life of Lincoln as well as in the history of the Mennonites, I was wont to claim that the Illinois rail splitter was of Mennonite as well as of Quaker stock. I have ceased to make this claim, however, for I have not been able to corroborate it from any of the genealogical studies I have read of the Lincoln family. Perhaps my memory played me false. The record I saw may have been that of a land transfer rather than a marriage.

But even if the martyred president did not have a strain of Mennonite blood in his veins, many of his relatives did. Both in Berks County and Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and in Virginia the Lincolns as well as the Boones for over three quarters of a century lived in communities thickly settled by Mennonites; and intermarriage among them was not uncommon in all three settlements.

My last year in the University of Chicago was spent very much as the others had been—in classroom routine, work on my thesis, and in attendance on downtown musical and other events. My fellowship duties were more congenial than the year before. I was asked to assist an exchange professor who had just arrived from Germany for a half year's lecture engagement. For the purpose of establishing friendly academic relations between the two countries, several large universities, including Chicago, had inaugurated the practice several years before of exchanging professors with the universities of Germany. The assignment to Chicago this year was a historian from the University of Berlin by the name of Oncken.

Professor Oncken, who was still a young man at this time and had never been in America before, was not a master of English. My task was to help him put his German lectures into good American. Since I could give him only one hour of my time each day, such portions of his lecture as I could not pass on went to the classroom uncensored. It was this uncensored part of the lecture each day that his students enjoyed most. One day when I came to the professor's room, in the Delprado Hotel along the Midway, I found this notice on his door—

> Dear Mr. Smith:
>
> I beg you excuse. I was suddenly prevented to stay at home. I must go quick the town down.
>
> Dr. Oncken

The next day the grammatical lapses in his lecture were especially delightful. In the word "heir" he insisted, like the proverbial Englishman, in giving the 'h' its full value. The French Revolution that day was a "blow up." Dr. Oncken was an inspiring lecturer, nevertheless, and these little peculiarities of his English only added freshness to his style and increased rather than diminished his popularity among his students. I very much enjoyed my association with him and his charming German wife. He returned home after one semester and is today connected with the University of Heidelberg, the leading historian of the German Republic, I am told.

I had finished my thesis by the end of the winter quarter, and it was approved by the history faculty. But I found that I had gathered a great deal more material than I could use in my thesis. This I decided to preserve for the writing of a complete history of the Mennonites of America.

When some years later this resolution was finally carried out, I found some difficulty in getting a publisher who was willing to run the risks involved in publishing the book. The publishing house of the main wing of the denomination, having published a book along similar lines just a few years before, was not interested in risking another. So I decided to publish the book myself and sell it by subscription. I did not stop to count the possible cost of the undertaking, nor the probable market for a book of this nature. I went into the venture blindly and trusted to luck for the results. I printed an edition of five thousand copies of which there are still three thousand unsold. This surplus number would, no doubt, be exceeded by nearly the whole of the other two thousand today had I not succeeded, fortunately, one summer in convincing a group of Goshen College students of the great profits they might make by selling the book during their vacation period throughout the various Mennonite communities in the country.

The seven boys who agreed to take up the work were a remarkable set of book agents. Not one quit before the end of the summer. I managed the campaign myself and kept in touch by letter with the boys continually, encouraging the unsuccessful with the good reports from the more fortunate, increasing the commissions as the enthusiasm lagged, and finally promising them the entire profits of the book as soon as the first cost of publication had been met. By the end of the summer most of the boys had averaged well in their commissions. They experienced the usual ups and downs of the traditional book agent. Henry Brunk traveled one entire week through the Mennonite community of Fulton County, where neither the author of the history nor the school with which he was connected was popular, and sold just four copies. One of these was a present to the bishop of the church. Sam Zook, on the other hand, who had the Illinois community, fared better. In one week he sold over one hundred copies, earning as many dollars, even though one of the German-speaking preachers, who did not find his name among the list of local Illinois notables of the church, assured the canvasser that he would not give him any "introducements" to the members of his congregation.

Sam's success was the more gratifying to me because his territory included my home community. It was a matter of pride to me to find that many of my friends and some of my relatives bought this book because of their interest in the author—even though their interest in the subject may not have been overwhelming. Evidently this was the case with a cousin of mine, Sam Lehman, who was not a great reader and, outside of a Bible occasionally and school texts for his children, made few purchases of a literary character. Not being interested particularly in the contents of books, he evidently thought their value and price ought to vary according to volume and like hogs and steers ought to sell by the pound. When this book was delivered to him some weeks after he had subscribed for it from a prospectus, he eyed it critically for a bit, and then carefully balancing it on the palm of his hand, at the same time shaking his head in disapproval, he remarked with a look of disappointment on his face, "Pretty light for two dollars and a half." But all this happened some years later.

It was during my final year, too, that the university lost its first president, Doctor Harper. He had been sick for some time with some incurable disease. It was known that his passing was but a matter of time. For six months or more he had been absent from his office. One day early in the spring I saw him as he was being wheeled about the campus in what he knew would be his farewell look at the buildings which he had erected in the course of years in response to his own dreams of a big university. Less than a week later he was dead. We were gratified to find how greatly he was esteemed in academic circles both in Europe and America. Telegrams of sympathy poured into the university office from all parts of the world; and funeral wreaths represented institutions of learning and famous men from both continents. Most interesting to us at the time was one from the emperor of Germany, who had come to know Harper through his work in behalf of the exchange professors at Chicago and Berlin.

I passed my examinations for the doctor's degree several weeks before the end of the spring term. Although I did not pass with distinction, I think I did so with credit. This practically ended my required academic work; and so I had several weeks before the end of the spring term to enjoy a well-deserved rest and look about for a position for the coming year, a task as fascinating as it might be disappointing. I had been invited to return to Goshen, but believing that several years of experience elsewhere might be both profitable and congenial I accepted, among several prospective openings, a position as teacher of history in the University of Arizona.

I had now come to the end of my long educational trail. It was more than fifteen years since I had entered the doors of Metamora high school, a timid, green country boy, but hungry to learn. I was about to receive the highest degree the university could confer; I was elected to a position in a state university; I was nine hundred dollars in debt; I was well past the days of youth and still unmarried, although I had met, just a short time before, a young schoolteacher down state of whom my friend Orie said, "She has the finest brown eyes I have ever seen."

Appendixes

CHOICE *APR. '83*
History, Geography & Travel
North America

OLEXER, Barbara. The enslavement of the American Indian. Library Research Associates, 1982. 270p ill maps bibl index 82-20341. 18.95 ISBN 0-912526-06-8. CIP

The title of this monograph makes one hope for a long overdue reevaluation of the topic. Not since Almon Lauber's *Indian Slavery in Colonial Times Within the Present Limits of the United States* (1913) has there been any attempt at a synthesis of this theme in Colonial history. Unfortunately, the title is misleading, and the contents do not measure up to scholarly imperatives. Although Olexer is attuned to American Indian perspectives, her research is insufficiently comparative and the style and format leave much to be desired. The typewritten facsimile, a lack of editing, numerous typos, an overquotation syndrome, and inadequately reproduced maps mar this work. The author's commentary and quotations are limited to New England coastal areas, the French in Canada, the southeastern Atlantic Seaboard, and the French occupation of Louisiana. The time span covers the period from European discovery to the middle of the 18th century. Most discouraging is the omission, in either text or bibliography, of the numerous scholars who have recently contributed studies on Colonial-Indian relations in North America: Gary Nash, *Red, White and Black* (CHOICE, Oct. 1974); Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (CHOICE, Feb. 1976); Douglas Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*

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APPENDIX I

C. Henry Smith: A Tribute[*]

Harold S. Bender

We have met today to pay a last tribute of affection and respect to one who was not only a fine teacher, a noble scholar, and a gifted writer, but also a Christian gentleman and a cherished friend. Not everyone endowed with great gifts from God and possessed of a goodly heritage from a noble and godly ancestry makes of such possessions an outstanding contribution to his time, for unselfish devotion and unremitting toil must be added to the gifts to make them fruitful. But this our departed brother did in full measure. By the single-minded and full-hearted dedication of his splendid talent to one great central purpose throughout a long and full life he was able to serve his generation and his church in an exceptional way. We who have been his colleagues in the field in which he was the master, the field of Mennonite history, had hoped we might enjoy for a few more years the fruit of his lifetime of research as well as the inspiration of his comradeship, particularly in the great enterprise of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* in which he was so deeply interested and in which I personally desired so greatly his full participation as co-editor. But it was not to be so. We have had our last conference, his last counsel has been given, and the last article written. He rests from . . . his labors and his works do follow him.

To us as younger Mennonite historians he will remain a challenge to complete objectivity, to scrupulous fairness and justice, and to effective and winning presentation of insights gained. We owe to him a great debt for his pioneer and creative work, particularly in the field of American Mennonite history. He was a valiant fighter, not only for historical truth, but for the best in our Mennonite heritage, particularly for our testimony of peace and nonresistance. With malice toward none, and charity toward all, he hoped for and worked toward a better understanding and eventual reunion of all our divided Mennonite brotherhood, rejoicing particularly in the contribution of the Mennonite Central Committee toward this goal.

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[*] *Remarks offered at funeral services at Bluffton College, Oct. 21, 1948.*

As a historian, Dr. Smith was unquestionably the greatest of the historians produced by the Mennonites of America and the peer of any of the European Mennonite historians. With his five major works, written over a period of thirty-five years, he published more full-length historical works than any other Mennonite historian. His particular gift was that of synthesis of masses of material into well-written, interesting, integrated accounts. He was pre-eminently the general Mennonite historian who took the great sweep of our history in both Europe and America and put it into clear, easily read volumes that will remain standard works for years to come. In addition to his major works he wrote six briefer booklets and numerous articles for current periodicals, for the *Mennonitisches Lexikon,* and for the *Mennonite Encyclopedia.*

I am particularly happy personally for the intimate association with our departed brother which it was my privilege to enjoy during the past twenty years. I think of the many occasions on which we indulged in hours of happy historical shoptalk, of the trip to the Amsterdam World Mennonite Conference of 1936, where he delivered a noteworthy address on "Mennonites and Culture," and the subsequent visit to Dr. Christian Neff, Weierhof, and of the long-continued joint planning which finally bore fruit in the Mennonite Research Fellowship and the *Mennonite Encyclopedia.*

We shall sorely miss him in the great enterprises of our modern Mennonite historical scholarship as well as in the intimate fellowship of those who are deeply devoted to the cause of our world Mennonite brotherhood.

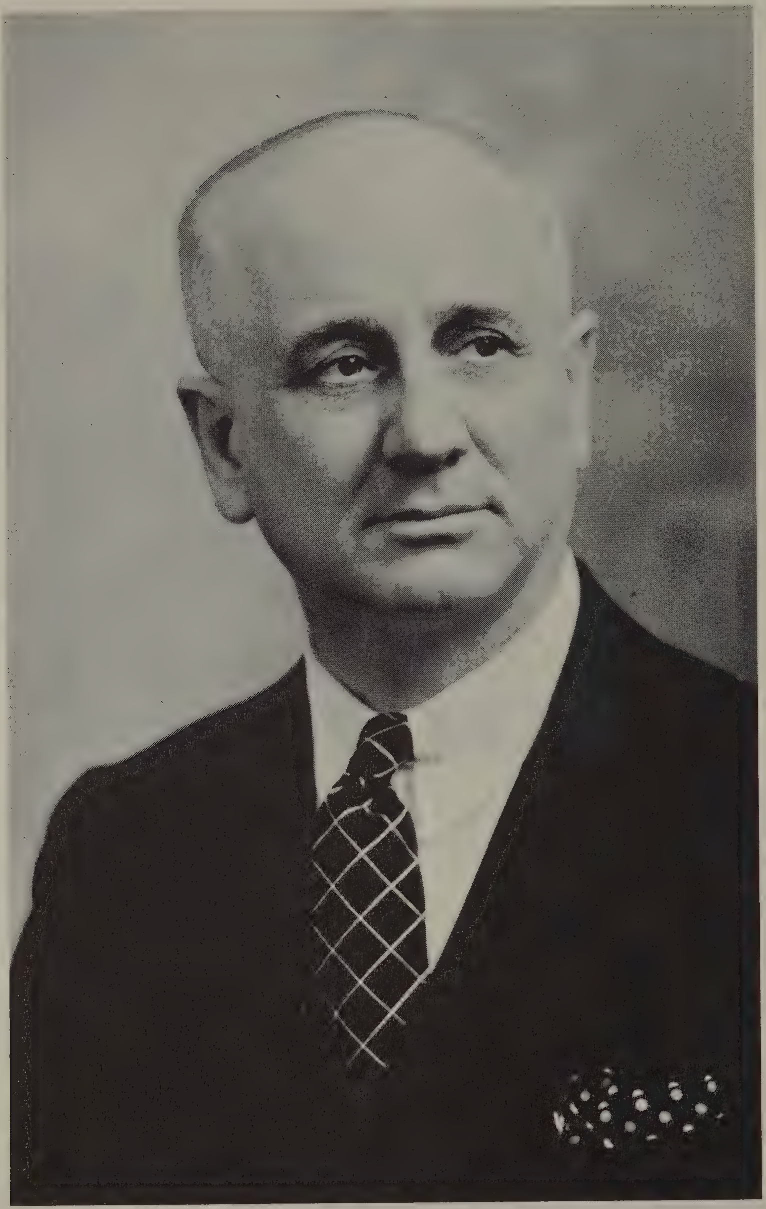
APPENDIX II

C. Henry Smith: A Brief Biography

Willard H. Smith

"I AM A thoroughbred Mennonite. For one hundred and fifty years at least, and perhaps for several hundred more beyond that, my ancestors were of the Mennonite faith. . . . If my Mennonite ancestry reaches back as far as that of most of the group, then I doubt whether a single non-Mennonite could be found among all my forebears during the past four hundred years. And so, physically and spiritually, I claim to be a full-blooded Mennonite." Thus wrote C. Henry Smith at the age of fifty concerning his ancestry. He himself was born in the Amish-Mennonite community of Metamora, Illinois, in 1875. His grandfather, Christian Smith, a native of Lorraine, France, came to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1829, and in 1833 to Illinois, settling in the new Partridge community just west of what is now Metamora. C. Henry, with three brothers and four sisters, was a son of Bishop John Smith and Magdalena Schertz Smith. The Partridge Amish church was organized in 1833, the year Christian Smith settled in the community. This was the second oldest in Woodford County and the first Amish congregation to be founded anywhere west of Ohio. It was also perhaps the first German-speaking congregation of any denomination to be established in Illinois. The founders of this congregation, which included Smith's grandfather, were thus real pioneers on this part of the midwestern frontier.

It was in this Amish-Mennonite community that Smith grew to manhood. The people, however, while Amish, were the type that with time changed some of their customs and gradu-



C. Henry Smith at the age of sixty.

ally pulled away from what became known as the Old Order Amish and eventually became Mennonite. Not a few of these changes were made in Smith's youth, such as the passing of hooks and eyes, the wearing of the beard, the use of the German language, and opposition to Sunday schools. C. Henry's father, a devout Christian, was one of the first Amish Mennonite leaders to speak out against smoking and drinking and to favor prohibition. This position brought him some criticism.

During the first years which C. Henry spent in the community elementary school there was no promise that he would go far in education. But in his later elementary school years the story was different. There began to develop in him that thirst for knowledge which was characteristic of him through life. After attending Metamora High School two winters, 1891-1893—the course at that time extended only over two years—C. Henry decided to take the teacher's examination and teach country school.

After teaching country school in Woodford County, Illinois, 1893-1896, for three years, Smith decided to go to college. He decided on the Illinois State Normal School at nearby Normal, Illinois, thinking that he was going to a college. Though he

Left: John Smith, the author's father, in his twenties.
Right: Magdalene Schertz Smith, the author's mother.

spent two years (1896-1898) at Normal, he was disappointed with the curriculum offered and with the lack of academic atmosphere.

In the fall of 1898 Smith accepted a call to teach at Elkhart Institute, Elkhart, Indiana. He had already spent one summer there as a student several years before. This marked the beginning of his pioneering in the field of Mennonite education, a task which, after the completion of his education, was to absorb his energies for the remainder of his life. Coming to Elkhart also marked the beginning of nearly fifty years of association with Noah E. Byers in Mennonite education—at Elkhart, Goshen, and Bluffton. Another association at Elkhart which made an impression on Smith was that with J. S. Coffman, the president of the institute's board of trustees.

After two years at Elkhart, Smith decided to finish his college course. Choosing the University of Illinois, he registered there in the fall of 1900. As his high school study had been irregular and most of his normal courses too elementary to count as entrance requirements, he had to work off a number of deficiencies before he was considered a full-fledged freshman. Despite

The homestead of Grandfather Christian Smith in Worth Township just west of Metamora, Illinois.

The birthplace and childhood home of C. Henry Smith near Metamora.

the deficiencies upon entering, by taking summer work, which included one summer at the University of Michigan, and by securing some credit by examination, Smith was almost able to finish the requirements for the B.A. degree by the end of two years. Transferring a summer's credits from the University of Chicago, in which institution he enrolled for further study, he secured his B.A. from Illinois in 1903. Despite his heavy load, the quality of his work was high enough to earn him a Phi Beta Kappa key.

At the University of Chicago, where he went for his graduate study, Smith found his life work. After floundering about in the fields of languages and English he finally decided on history as the field of his special interest.

Securing his master's degree in the spring of 1903—a week or so, incidentally, before his B.A. was conferred at the University of Illinois—Smith accepted a call to teach at Goshen College during the years 1903 to 1905. During these two years, he taught history and English and served as librarian.

He returned to Chicago in the fall of 1905 to complete his doctorate. Invited early in the fall to read a paper before the history club, composed of graduate students and faculty members in the history department, he decided to read a paper on the Mennonites. He had already done some research in the rich library collection of John F. Funk at Elkhart, and he now presented the results of this research. The group was favorably impressed. He was elected president of the history club, and soon afterward he received a history fellowship. The thesis subject which he proposed, "The Mennonites of America," was accepted.

At Chicago Smith studied under some of the country's ablest historians — Professors Judson, Jameson, Merriam (political

"These were still the horse and buggy days. For most people four or five miles was still the visiting radius. Ten miles was an extended journey; while a visit of fifteen or twenty miles to friends or relatives was an event long to be remembered." See page 155.

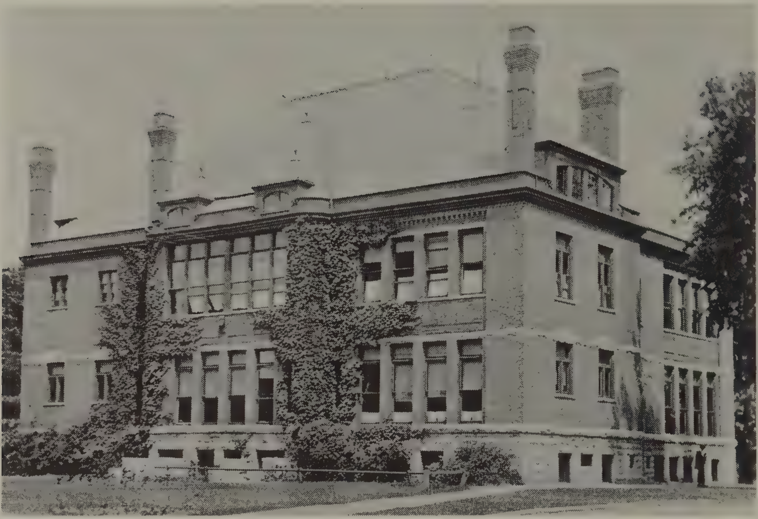
scientist) Terry, Thompson, Schevill, McLaughlin, and others. He also associated with students who became leading members of their craft in later years. Smith always cherished these associations. A number of his associates, both teachers and fellow students, have told the present writer of their respect and regard for Smith.

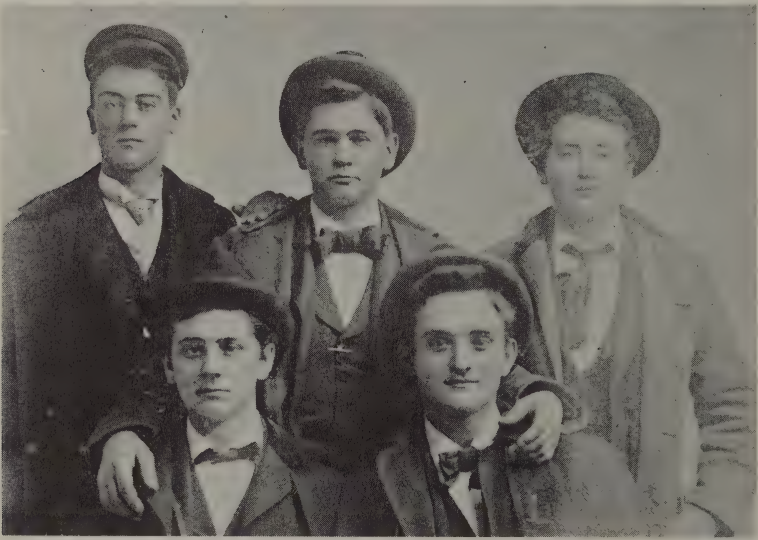
He was able to complete his course work and his thesis during his second year at the university. He passed his examinations successfully and received the Ph.D. degree in the spring of 1907. He had now come to the end of a long educational trail—an unusually long one for a Mennonite at that time.

For the following year Smith had accepted a position in the history department of the University of Arizona. But for some reason he changed his mind with regard to that appointment and taught instead in Manual Training High School in Indianapolis. At the end of the year, President N. E. Byers of Goshen College went to Indianapolis to confer with him about returning to the Goshen faculty. Not caring particularly for high school teaching, Smith decided that one year of it was enough, and he returned to Goshen in the fall of 1908. As indicated above, he had taught there during the years 1903 to 1905 after receiving his master's degree. The year 1903 was the year in which Elkhart Institute was moved to Goshen. In fact, Smith participated in the historic ground-breaking ceremonies on the new Goshen campus in June 1903, where he delivered the address of the day.

Above: The author as a seventeen-year-old student.

Below: The old Partridge church near Metamora was the center of worship for the pioneer Amish settlement in Illinois for more than a half century.





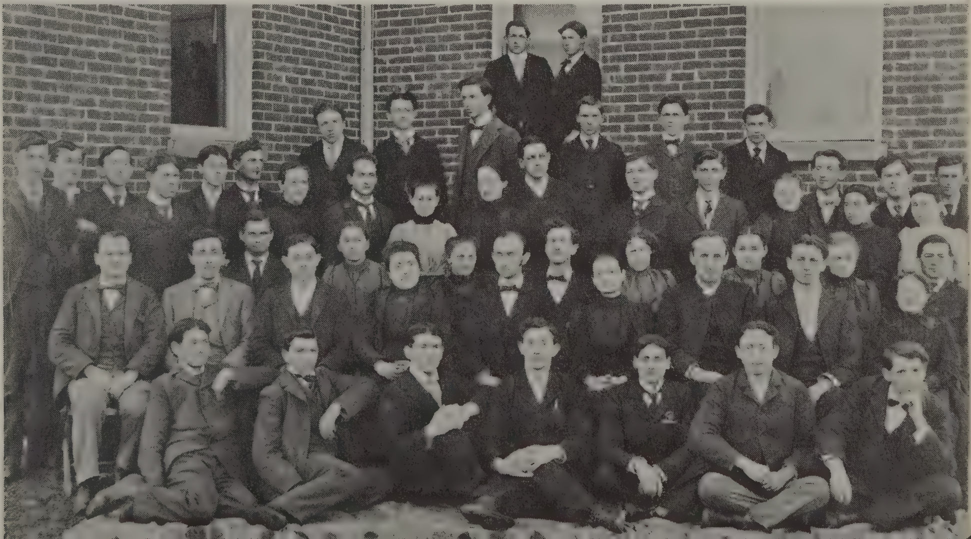
Above: North Hall on the campus of Illinois State Normal University was built in 1892. Here the author had his first major school experience away from home, 1896-1898.

Below: Friends from home visit at Normal. Standing from left to right are Chris Steider, Pete Sommers, and Johnie Smith. Seated from left to right are C. Henry Smith and Ben Schertz.

The Elkhart Institute moved from its first rented location in downtown Elkhart, Indiana, to this building which was on South Prairie Street and just opposite the Mennonite church. The building was dedicated in 1896.

His years at Goshen were happy ones. Teaching history, he felt, to interested students of more mature age was not a task, but a delightful privilege—the kind of thing one would want to do even if he were not paid for it. And the pay certainly was not large. In fact, he consented to come to Goshen for about half of what he received for teaching high school in Indianapolis. He never received more than $800 per year at Goshen, and at first his salary was less than that. But he was not interested in teaching and research for the money he could get out of it. If he had been, he would not have remained all his life in Mennonite institutions.

Faculty and students at the Elkhart Institute in 1899. Smith, a young instructor, is seated second from the right in the second row.



The University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana provided the undergraduate education for the Mennonite country boy from Metamora who received both a degree and Phi Beta Kappa honors from the school. This is a view of University Hall as it appeared during the years C. Henry Smith attended.

In December 1908 he was married to Laura Ioder of Tiskilwa, Illinois. To the end she remained a loyal and faithful companion and shared his various interests.

In 1909 Smith was appointed the first dean of Goshen College, which office he continued to fill until the close of his service at Goshen in 1913. At that time, however, the work of dean was not so exacting, the president doing part of the work now associated with the dean's office. Dean Smith and President Byers collaborated closely in the various problems confronting the institution. One organization, still functioning, which Smith and Byers started, was the Intercollegiate Peace Oratorical Association, which provides for the annual intercollegiate peace oratorical contests. While at Goshen, Smith, in 1909, published his first major book, *The Mennonites of America*, an enlargement of his dissertation. This work became a household item in Mennonite homes.

In 1913 Dean Smith, along with President Byers, accepted a call to serve in Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio. Here, except for one leave of absence, he remained as a Professor of History and Political Science until he retired from teaching in 1946. In addition to teaching, he carried on an amazing amount of research in Mennonite history. For several years he was also secretary of the college.

In 1920 appeared his *The Mennonites,* and in 1927 *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites—an Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier* was published. Dr. Smith gathered part of the material for his latter book while teaching at Bethel College at North Newton, Kansas, during the year 1922-1923. His *Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century,* a volume published by the Pennsylvania German Society, appeared in 1929. His *magnum opus, The Story of the Mennonites,* was published in 1941. This work gives a full

This view of the University of Chicago, taken in 1906, shows the dormitories for divinity students in the left and middle background and Cobb Lecture Hall in the right background.

Inset: C. Henry Smith received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago in 1907.

treatment of the Mennonites both in Europe and America. His shorter works and numerous articles are listed elsewhere.

Besides teaching and research duties, Smith formed several business connections. He helped to organize in the 1920s the Citizens National Bank of Bluffton and the Pandora National Bank of Pandora, Ohio. Of the former he was president from its organization until his death. Of the Pandora bank he was a member of the board of directors, and president for a few years. That these banks were well managed is indicated by the fact that both of them opened without restrictions immediately after the bank holiday in 1933. From the middle of the thirties on he gave more time to these banks and was relieved of a part of his teaching.

At the end of 1946 he retired altogether from teaching, with the exception of one course in Mennonite history which he continued to teach two years longer. In recognition of his long and outstanding service in Bluffton College and in the Mennonite church, he was granted the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.) by Bluffton College in its 1947 commencement exercises.

His work for the church was not confined to teaching and research. He frequently addressed church meetings, and he served on church boards and committees. For seven years, 1941-1948, he was a member of the Board of Publication of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. Earlier he had been a charter member of the Church

The ground-breaking ceremony for Goshen College occurred in 1903 when Elkhart Institute was moved to Goshen, Indiana. C. Henry Simth, who gave the chief address on this occasion, is standing in the center of the third row.

An early view of Goshen College shows the Administration Building in the center and Kulp Hall on the right.

History Committee of the (Old) Mennonite Church, serving from 1911 to 1921. He also served on the Historical Committee of the General Conference Mennonite Church the last years of his life.

Smith believed in the educational value of travel. Not neglecting his own country, he enjoyed the scenic and historic spots in all sections, particularly in the West for which he had a special fondness. He made trips also to Canada, Hawaii, Alaska, Mexico, and, of course, to Europe. One of his trips to Europe was made in 1936 on the occasion of the third Mennonite World Conference at Amsterdam where he served on the program. His wife, when able, accompanied him on these trips.

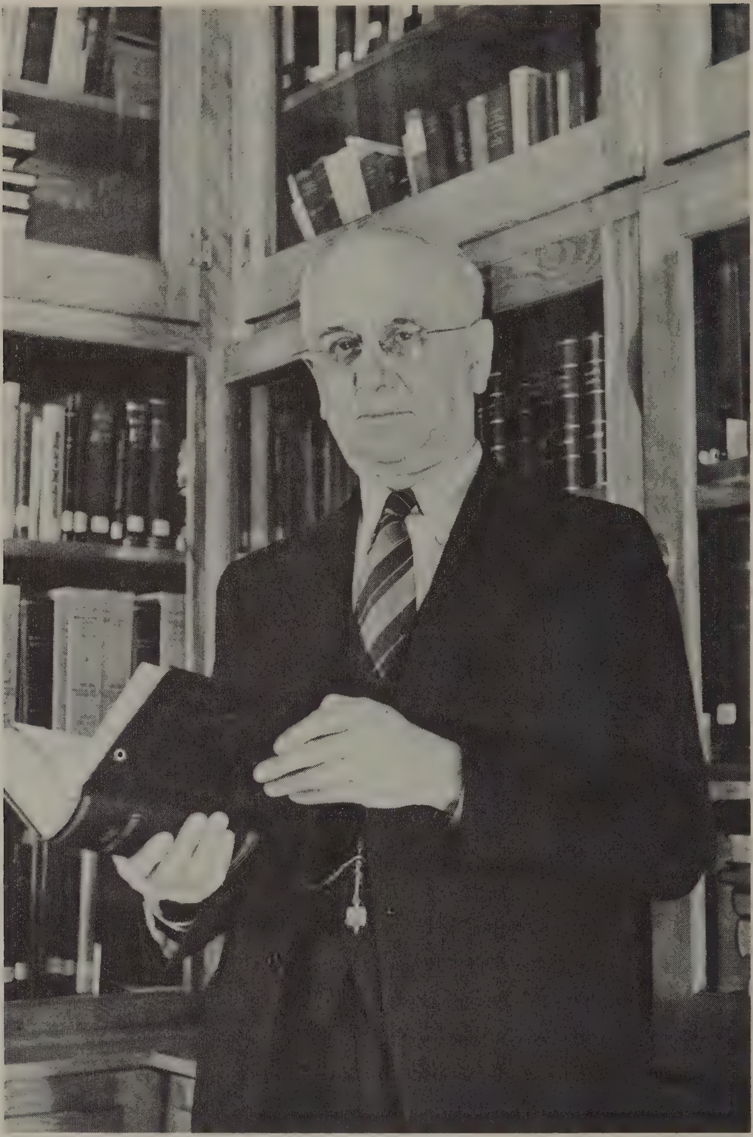
Laura Ioder of Tiskilwa, Illinois, who became Mrs. C. Henry Smith.

Smith was not the kind who talked much about his health. Long before the end, apparently, he and his doctor alone knew the serious nature of his last illness. Quietly and unobtrusively he began to put his business affairs in order in preparation for that day. Only after his death did relatives and friends see and understand the significance of the detailed preparations he had made.

And yet almost to the last he continued his work in Mennonite history. He served as the first president of the Mennonite Research Fellowship, organized in 1945. Co-editor with Harold S. Bender of a projected new *Mennonite Encyclopedia* [published 1955-1959], he had been assigned to write a number of articles for the publication. A few weeks before his passing most of these articles were sent in. A fruitful life was brought to a close on October 18, 1948.

The greatest monument to his memory will, no doubt, be his historical works. He was a pioneer in the field of Mennonite history and the first one in America to be fully trained for such work. Humble in spirit, he would have been the last to insist that his work was perfect or free from error. A few months before his death he was laying plans for a revision, with the aid of younger historians, of his *Story of the Mennonites.* Always a liberal giver to good causes, he was not narrow in his benefactions. Not infrequently he donated to institutions other than the one with which he was connected. Even his will provided for such gifts, including funds for the encouragement of peace orations in five Mennonite colleges and scholarships in two. Finally, C. Henry Smith will be remembered as a great and inspiring teacher, a Christian gentleman and scholar, and a kindly and generous friend.

Musselman Library at Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, where C. Henry Smith had his office. It was during his teaching career here that he made the major contribution of his life.



C. Henry Smith in his library.

APPENDIX III

The Writings of C. Henry Smith

Nelson P. Springer

A. MAJOR BOOKS

The Mennonites of America. Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House Press, 1909. Illustrated, bibliography, index, 6¼ x 8¾. Pp. 484.

The Mennonites of America (Illinois edition). Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House Press, 1909. Same as the above but with an appendix of 27 pages presenting (1) Illinois congregations, (2) Short sketch of the life of Christian Ropp, (3) Pioneer Amish bishops of Illinois, (4) Extract from David Kindig's Journal, (5) Early pioneers from 1831 to 1852, (6) Old meeting houses, and (7) Illinois ministers present at the General Conference held at the home of John Struhbar near Danvers in 1866. Illustrated, bibliography, index, 6¼ x 8¾. Pp. 511.

Mennonites of America. A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Literature in candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Chicago Department of History. Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House, 1909. Paper cover, illustrated, bibliography, contains chapters IV, V, XIV, and XVIII of *The Mennonites of America.* Pp. 147.

The Mennonites: A Brief History of Their Origin and Later Development in both Europe and America. Berne, Indiana:

Mennonite Book Concern, 1920. Illustrated, bibliography, 6 x 8½. Pp. 340.

The Coming of the Russian Mennonites: An Episode in the Settling of the Last Frontier 1874-1884. Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927. Illustrated, 5¾ x 8¼. Pp. 296.

The Mennonite Immigration to Pennsylvania in the Eighteenth Century. Part XXXIII of a Narrative and Critical History Prepared at the Request of The Pennsylvania-German Society. Norristown, Pennsylvania: The Norristown Press, 1929. Illustrated, 6½ x 9½. Pp. 412.

The Story of the Mennonites. Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1941 (Second printing, 1945). Illustrated, index, 5½ x 8. Pp. 823. Revised editions: Newton, Kansas: Mennonite Publication Office, 1950, 1957. Pp. 856.

B. Minor Books

Mennonites in History. Scottdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Book and Tract Society, 1907. An address delivered in Philadelphia; 5¼ x 7¼. Pp. 41.

Menno Simons, Apostle of the Nonresistant Life. Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1936. Bibliography, 5¼ x 7½. Pp. 76.

Christian Peace: Four Hundred Years of Mennonite Peace Principles and Practice. Published by the Peace Committee of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America, Newton, Kansas, 1938. Paper cover, 5½ x 8½. Pp. 32.

One Hundred Years Ago. An address delivered at the first homecoming celebration of the old Partridge congregation near Metamora, Illinois, August 20, 1940. Paper cover, 4½ x 6½. Pp. 32.

Mennonites in America. Akron, Pennsylvania: The Mennonite Central Committee, 1942. Number II in a series of six studies on "Mennonites and Their Heritage" designed for use in Civilian Public Service Camps and edited by Harold S. Bender. Paper cover, 5¼ x 7¾. Pp. 72. Second edition, also 1942.

Metamora. Bluffton, Ohio: The College Book Store, 1947. Paper cover, 5½ x 8¾. Pp. 74.

C. BOOK EDITED

Smith, C. Henry and Hirschler, E. J., editors. *The Story of Bluffton College.* Bluffton, Ohio: Bluffton College, 1925. Illustrated, 6¼ x 9½. Pp. 296.

D. ARTICLES IN THE *Mennonitisches Lexikon*

Volume I
Arthur, eine kleine amische Gemeinde im Staate Illinois
Arthur, amische Gemeinde
Aurora, eine kleine amische Gemeinde in Ohio
Aurora, eine Gemeinde im Staate Nebraska
Belleville
Bethel, eine kleine Mennoniten-Gemeinde nicht weit von West Liberty

Volume II
Illinois
Literatur: 4. Die Mennoniten in der amerikanischen Literatur

Volume III
Maryland
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nebraska
New Holland (Pa.)
New York
Nord-Amerika
Pennsylvanien

E. ARTICLES IN THE *Mennonite Encyclopedia*

Allen County, Ohio
All-Mennonite Convention
Ashland County, Ohio
John B. Baer
Peter Balzer

Baptists
Bluffton, Ohio
Bluffton College
Bluffton First Mennonite Church
Burlington Railroad
Butler County, Ohio
Cleveland
Diener-Versammlung
Ebenezer Mennonite Church
Eureka, Ill.
Pennsylvania

F. ARTICLES IN MENNONITE PERIODICALS

Key to Abbreviations

BA—*Bluffton Alumnus* (Bluffton, Ohio)
CEv—*Christian Evangel* (Bloomington, Ill.)
CEx—*Christian Exponent* (Wooster, Ohio)
CM—*Christian Monitor* (Scottdale, Pa.)
FA—*Family Almanac* (Scottdale, Pa.)
GCR—*Goshen College Record* (Goshen, Ind.)
GW—*Gospel Witness* (Scottdale, Pa.)
IM—*Institute Monthly* (Elkhart, Ind.)
M—*The Mennonite* (Newton, Kan.)
ML—*Mennonite Life* (North Newton, Kan.)
MQR—*Mennonite Quarterly Review* (Goshen, Ind.)
MYA—*Mennonite Year-Book and Almanac* (Souderton, Pa.)
MYD—*Mennonite Yearbook and Directory* (Scottdale, Pa.)
RAMC—*Report of All-Mennonite Convention*
YGCM—*Year Book of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of N. A.* (Berne, Ind.)
YCCM—*Yearbook of the Central Conference of Mennonites* (Bloomington, Ill.)
YPP—*Young People's Paper* (Elkhart, Ind.)

"Reading and Home Education"
    YPP, ii, 34 (March 2, 1895)
"The True Aim in Education"
    YPP, ii, 66 (April 27, 1895)
"Environment and Its Effects"
    YPP, ii, 106 (July 6, 1895)
"Truth"
    YPP, iv, 122 (July 31, 1897)
"Bondage"
    IM, i, 50, 51 (April 15, 1899)

"Department of English"
IM, ii, 12, 13 (September 1899)
"The Value of Studying the Classics"
IM, ii, 34-36 (November 1899)
"The Language of the Bible"
IM, ii, 117, 118 (April 1900)
"The Poetry of the Bible"
IM, ii, 131-133 (May 1900; concluding installment not published)
"A Remarkable Book"
GCR, vii, 391, 392 (September 1904)
"Mennonite History"
FA, 1905, pp. 6, 8.
GCR, vii, 451-453 (January 1905)
"The Anabaptists"
GW, i, 70, 71; 78; 102; 110; 118; 126; 134; 142 (May 31, June 7, 28, July 5, 12, 19, 26, August 2, 1905)
"What Can Colleges Do to Promote Peace?"
GCR, vii, 545-550 (June-July 1905)
"The Mennonites in History" (Address delivered in Philadelphia, Pa., June 24, 1906, and later printed in book form)
GW, ii, 530; 546, 547; 562; 578 (November 21, 28, December 5, 12, 1906)
"The Amish in Illinois"
MYD, 1907, pp. 18, 20, 22, 24
"Christopher Dock: The Pious Schoolmaster of the Skippack"
CM, i, 18, 19 (January 1909)
"Menno Simons"
CM, i, 241, 242; 274-276 (August, September 1909)
"The Mennonites as Pathfinders in American History"
CM, ii, 435, 436 (February 1910)
"The Forces That Make for Peace"
CM, ii, 468, 469; 502, 511; 532, 533 (March, April, May 1910)
"A Few Thoughts on Education"
CEv, i, 30, 31 (December 1910)
Educational Section Editorials: "Our Policy"; "The Farm"; "A Trip Through Central Europe"; "Tolstoy"
CEv, i, 24 (January 1911)

"Some of the Providences of American History"
CM, iii, 17; 51, 52 (January, February 1911)
Educational Section Editorials; "Our Feathered Friends"; "The Progress of the Cause of Peace"; "The Spirit of Education"; "The House Fly and Typhoid Fever"
CEv, i, 70-72 (February 1911)
Educational Section Editorial: "Pennsylvania German"
CEv, i, 118 (March 1911)
"The Mennonites"
CEv, i, 121-124 (March 1911)
Educational Section Editorials: "Our Contributors"; "Progress"
CEv, i, 166 (April 1911)
"Conservation of Natural Resources"
CEv, i, 267-271; 314-316, 332 (June, July 1911)
"The Early Mennonites as Bible Students"
CM, iii, 274 (June 1911)
Educational Section Editorial: "Things to Teach"
CEv, ii, 313, 314 (July 1911)
"Christianity as a World Movement"
CEv, ii, 360-363; 409-412, 428 (August, September 1911)
"Rambles Through Historic New England"
CEv, ii, 458-460, 476; 507, 508, 512; 76-79 (October, November 1911; February 1912)
GCR, xiv, 25-29; 36-38 (October, November 1911)
"Socialism"
CEv, ii, 157, 158; 205, 206; 269-271; 317-319 (April, May, June, July 1912)
"A Review of the Early History of the American Mennonites"
RAMC, 1913, pp. 38-50
"Conservation of Childhood"
CEv, iii, 191-198 (May 1913)
CM, v, 145, 146; 180, 190; 210, 211; 240, 241 (May, June, July, August 1913)
"The Standard College" (Synopsis of a speech at Anniversary Day Program, June 17, 1913)
GCR, xv, 38 (June 1913)
"Our Common Heritage" (Address delivered at All-Mennonite Convention, Berne, Indiana, August 19, 20, 1913)
CEv, iii, 472-477 (December 1913)

"The Hand of God in American History"
CEv, iv, 186-188; 225-228; 262, 263 (May, June, July 1914)
"The Great War"
CEv, v, 104-106; 188-190; 226-228; 264-268; 305-307; 346-348; 392-394 (March, May, June, July, August, September, October 1915) CM, vii, 52, 53; 80, 81; 113, 114; 149, 150; 178, 179; 207, 208; 241, 242; 274, 275 (February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September 1915)
"The European War"
CEv, v, 468-470 (December 1915)
CM, vii, 368, 369 (December 1915)
"Mexico"
CM, viii, 658, 659; 689, 690 (September, October 1916)
"The Great War"
CM, ix, 83, 84; 113, 114; 146, 147 (March, April, May 1917)
"Poland"
CEv, vii, 110, 111 (May 1917)
"Other World-Wars"
CEv, vii, 134-136 (June 1917)
"The Grand Canyon"
CEv, vii, 208, 209 (September 1917)
"Yellowstone Is a Wonderland"
CEv, vii, 230, 231 (October 1917)
"Yosemite Falls Surpass Niagara"
CEv, vii, 254, 255 (November 1917)
"Alaska Summer Has No Nights"
CEv, ix, 234, 239 (Ocotber 1919)
"Plockhoy and the First Mennonite Colony in America"
MYA, 1920, pp. 18-21
"The Indians of Alaska"
CEv, x, 64, 65 (March 1920)
"What Do You Read?"
CEv, x, 114, 115 (May 1920)
"Mennonites and War"
RAMC, 1922, pp. 77-85
"A Few Statistics"
M, xxxviii, 5, 6 (February 8, 1923)

"Lessons from Mennonite History" (Paper read before the Ministers' Meeting of the Western District Conference at Goessel, Kansas)
  CEv, xiii, 208, 209, 215; 227, 239; 257; 280, 281, 287 (September, October, November, December 1923)
  M, xxxviii, 1, 2, 3, 6; 3; 3, 6 (October 4, 11, 25, November 1, 1923)
"Some Old Letters"
  CEx, i, 118, 119; 146; 178, 192; 226, 240 (April 11, May 9, June 6, July 18, 1924)
An article without a definite title in Educational Section about education in England, particularly at Oxford University
  CEv, xvi, 280, 281 (December 1924)
"The Next Step" (Opening Address)
  RAMC, 1925, pp. 11-15
"England"
  CEx, iii, 278, 279 (August 27, 1926)
"France"
  CEx, iii, 309, 310 (September 24, 1926)
"Germany and Czecho-Slovakia"
  CEx, iii, 329-331 (October 8, 1926)
"A Pilgrimage to the Homes of Our Mennonite Forefathers"
  M, xlii, 1, 2; 6, 8; 6, 7; 1, 2; 2; 1, 2; 2, 3 ; 1, 2; 1, 2; 1, 2 (January 20, 27, February 3, 24, March 3, June 2, 9, July 21, 28, August 4, 1927)
"A Worthy Cause"
  CEx, iv, 237; 260, 261 (August 2, 30, 1927)
"The Outlook for International Peace"
  RAMC, 1930, pp. 85-91
"Bluffton College"
  YGCM, 1931, pp. 30, 31
"The New History"
  BA, i, 55, 56 (March 1932)
"Mennonites and War"
  CEv, xxii, 58, 66 (March 1932)
"After Seventy-five Years"
  YGCM, 1935, pp. 8-11
"Mennonite World Congress, Amsterdam, June 29-July 23, 1936"
  YGCM, 1937, pp. 18-22

"Christopher Dock—Mennonite Educator"
M, lii, 7, 8 (August 17, 1937)
"Separation of Church and State" (Brotherhood Topic for March)
M, liii, 2, 3 (March 1, 1938)
"Mennonites and Culture"
MQR, xii, 71-84 (April 1938)
"Is the General Conference Losing Its Peace Testimony?"
M, lvii, 1, 2 (July 28, 1942)
"God and War"
M, lvii, 6 (December 15, 1942)
"Dwight L. Moody and War" (reprinted from a tract published by the Middle District Conference of Mennonites, C. Henry Smith, Ed.)
M, lviii, 1, 2 (September 28, 1943)
"A Communication from C. Henry Smith Concerning the Review of His Book, *The Story of the Mennonites*"
MQR, xvii, 246-252 (October 1943)
"Byways of Mennonite History"
M, lviii, 5, 6; 5, 6; 5, 6; 4, 5; 12; lix, 5, 6; 6, 7 (October 5, 19, November 23, December 7, 28, 1943; January 11, February 8, 1944)
"A Communication from Dr. C. Henry Smith on Mennonite Historiography"
MQR, xviii, 122-125 (April 1944)
"Keeping the Faith"
M, lix, 5 (July 11, 1944)
"Mennonites and Dunkards"
M, lix, 5 (September 19, 1944)
"A Five Foot Book Shelf on Peace"
M, lix, 5, 10, 11; lx, 15, 16 (October 3, November 28, 1944; January 23, 1945)
"The Hutterites"
M, lx, 4, 5 (January 9, 1945)
"The General Conference"
M, lx, 5, 6 (May 15, 1945)
"I Find My Life Work"
ML, i, 9-11, 43-45 (January 1946)
"A Pioneer Mennonite Educator and His Family—N. E. Byers"
ML, iii, 44-46 (January 1948)

BOOK REVIEWS:

Correll, E. H. *Das Schweizerische Täufer-Mennonitentum*
CEx, vi, 245, 246 (August 16, 1927)

Weber, Harry F. *Centennial History of the Mennonites of Illinois, 1829-1929*
MQR, v, 62-64 (January 1932)

Umble, John. *Ohio Mennonite Sunday Schools*
MQR, xiv, 212-214 (July 1941)

Krehbiel, H. P. *The History of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America,* Vols. I and II
MQR, xix, 238, 239 (July 1945)

Climenhaga, A. W. *History of the Brethren in Christ Church*
MQR, xx, 142, 143 (April 1946)

Wenger, John Christian. *Glimpses of Mennonite History and Doctrine*
MQR, xxii, 72 (January 1948)

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and civil liberty. The public school, after all, is still the greatest leveling force in American life, and the strongest bulwark of our democratic society.

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THE PASSING OF LANDMARKS *There came an evil day when the farmers of our community became convinced that farm land had become too valuable to permit the existence of trees for any reason other than utility. Either they had to bear fruit or protect the milk cows from the heat of the noonday sun, and even in the latter case the only proper place for them would be in the barren cow lot where their cool shade could not interfere with growing grass. And so these grand old cottonwoods around which clusered so many of our pleasant childhood memories fell victim to the woodman's ax one after another until only a few were left about the barn lot. Even these are now passing, victims of disease, old age, and storms. I felt their loss keenly; every time one was cut down or destroyed from some other cause, it affected me like the passing of an old friend.*

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